

The Hard Way – Chapter 1

"Be careful, this is heavy."

"I hope so; it wouldn't do much good if it wasn't."

"How are you going to keep it in place?"

"Put the computer table and storage cabinet back in place, maybe drill a pair of holes and run lag screws into studs. Once you get the second plate in place, it will hold the first."

"This is stupid, why are you doing this?"

"Because I can?"

"No, really, what's it all about? Why would anyone line 2 walls of their 'office' with 1" thick steel road plate 4' high?"

"How about a NIJ rating of V or higher."

"A whosit?"

"National Institute of Justice rating to stop something bigger than a .30 caliber armor piercing round."

"If you say so. What, you think the Russians are coming? I didn't even like the movie."

The NIJ standards stop at IV, .30 caliber armor piercing rifle bullets. I had it in mind to evade most of his questions, what he didn't know couldn't hurt me.

Hi there, this is your friendly neighborhood crackpot, TOM. Opinions are like buttholes, everyone has one. I'm blessed, I have several, opinions. For example:

1. Are these the End Times, the so called End of Days? That bit in Revelation is John's description of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire; OTOH, history repeats, a proven fact.
2. Will we really have WW III? If you would prefer to call it WW 2.5, it's ok with me. Call it what it really is, GTW (Global Thermonuclear War).
3. Who do you think will win? Nobody, we all lose.
4. Will it involve Israel? Har Megiddo is a hill in Israel, what do YOU think? That crackpot president from Iran has all but promised the final battle with Israel.

5. Why would you believe that crackpot? I have a mirror.

6. Are you prepared, just in case? I'm pedaling as fast as I can; it isn't easy to store that many rolls of toilet paper.

Those were top of my head examples. Let me point out that you can never be over prepared. However, with inflation, that's not really a danger.

An adequate shelter, for your family only, will set you back 50 grand, shipped and installed. If you insist on a generator, add another 10-12 grand plus parts (filters, oil, etc.) Generators don't run on air alone, so you need 4 more blast valves, pipe, a fuel tank and fuel. One blast valve is for the generator inlet, the second for the generator outlet, the third for cooling air intake and the fourth for hot air outlet. Diesel engines last the longest and diesel fuel is only slightly more expensive than gasoline; 8k gallons will last until you can get more.

You'd better get propane jets for all your stoves, your furnace, your hot water heater and your dryer; unless you're all electric. Don't forget to get instructions on how to install them, too. 500-gallons of propane should see you through the winter.

As a practical matter, you should have an underground water tank that fills from your well or city line. You can add an electrified cutoff valve when it's installed between the water source and the tank. Don't forget the other end, you need some kind of sewage tank and maybe a pump to keep it empty. If you live inside city limits like me, you'll have to bury everything lest the city find out what you have and raise hell.

Don't pull permits, building inspectors are jerks who make you change it once it's done. Plus it increases the assessed value of your home and they tax you on it. You really need 2 things, time and money. Time is free and money isn't. We had plenty of the former and none of the latter.

Even after we refinanced the house, yet again – this time at 6.5%, and took out a wad of cash, all we accomplished was to get even. Although the real estate market was all but in the toilet, the appraised value of the home was almost double the total loan. Part of the money got us out of debt, again, some went to painting, again, and Sharon had the block walls put up. They were only 6' high because you need a variance to go higher.

Which, with a few exceptions did nothing for preparedness. She gave me \$X,XXX to spend on anything I wanted. My short list was:

1. Taurus PT1911 with a total of 7 8-round magazines; 1,000-round case of 230gr Gold Dot Speer ammo and 1,000 round case of 230gr Lawman FMJ

2. Mossberg 590A1 w/ ghost ring sights, Marine Corps model; 1 case ea. of: Brenneke slugs, 12 pellet 00 Buck, 27 pellet #4 Buck; 1 box ea. #6 & #9 shot

3. 10 20-round type M-14 magazines

If there is any money left:

4. 1 CD V-717; 6 bottles KIO₃; 5 CD V-742s

5. 3,000 rounds of 7.62x51mm FMJ (or any part of it)

If nothing else, I am consistent... Don't you love the news?

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TEHRAN (Reuters) - Iran's president said on Sunday the Lebanese and the Palestinians had pressed a **countdown button** to bring an end to Israel.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who triggered outrage in the West two years ago when he said Israel should be wiped off the map, has often referred to the destruction of the Jewish state but says Iran is not a threat.

"With God's help, the countdown button for the destruction of the Zionist regime has been pushed by the hands of the children of Lebanon and Palestine," Ahmadinejad said in a speech.

"By God's will, we will witness the destruction of this regime in the near future," he said. He did not elaborate.

WASHINGTON – The most extensive study of the effects of nuclear detonations in four major US cities paints a grim picture of millions of deaths, overwhelmed hospitals and loss of command-and-control capability by government.

But the 3 year study by the Center for Mass Destruction Defense at the University of Georgia says a concerted effort to teach civilians what to do in the event of a nuclear attack is the best – perhaps only – thing that could save an untold number of lives that will otherwise be needlessly lost.

"If a nuclear detonation were to occur in a downtown area, the picture would be bleak there," said Cham Dallas, director of the program and professor in the college of pharmacy. "But in urban areas farther from the detonation, there actually is quite a bit that we can do. In certain areas, it may be possible to turn the death rate from 90 percent in some burn populations to probably 20 or 30 percent – and those are very big differences – simply by being prepared well in advance."

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Sorry, but I'm not ready to bend over and kiss my sorry butt goodbye. We might be short on preps, but attitude is more important. If something does happen I might be able to

salvage the cowboy guns I favor. Plus if we looked around some we might get the other things I want, especially the improved flashhiders.

Those news excerpts were just an example of the times we faced. If I were half my age, I'd dig the hole in the backyard with a shovel and wheelbarrow. Then I'd do a Gunny Highway and improvise, adapt and overcome. Seems like I've been saying this for years. To prove survival is possible, I dreamed up some money and used it to prove the point. My printing press broke down and this time I was Senator Ain't-No-Way.

I spent my share; Amy and she spent hers. It was almost worth it, Geoff painted the interior and that patch on the eaves that the painter missed when they painted the house. They put down tile throughout, which looked like oak planking. We should have sold it then and there.

I didn't get all that 7.62 ammo I wanted, maybe half. My two cases of SA were filled up to the full 9 battle packs each plus I got one more with battle packs to round it out. Everything looked good except for the backyard. The mere mention of the word 'garden' almost started a fight. That Fruitless Mulberry had more roots above ground than below, it had to go.

A garden wouldn't need many plants: cucumbers, onions, peppers, tomatoes, potatoes, green beans and maybe some watermelons. It wouldn't take much because I have to do most of the work and I planned to space the rows so I could rototill and do minimum weeding. Maybe a project for next year. If we could clean out the shed, we could store the new jars there and do the canning on the back patio stove. If I did pickles every year, they could vary by year – bread and butter, dills and sweet pickles and then start over. After the harvest, I could rototill in the plants and start over the next year. If we saved enough on groceries we could cover the increasing gas prices with maybe a little left over.

MLK had a dream and so did I... cut the food bill so I could buy more firearms and ammo. This wasn't a dream, it was my worst fear: Juicy tidbits aside, a book on Hillary outlines a journey that took the former first lady from being a passionate advocate of deeply held causes to an insincere, soulless politician. My first thought, the Antichrist is running for President.

Long an advocate of the beans and rice theory, I'd been seeing more people recommend that combination lately. Properly stored, they last almost forever losing little nutritional value. Together, they supply most of the essentials. Add some canned meat (can you spell Spam?), bottles of Beano, maybe a multivitamin and you'll get by. If you have a generator to keep the food in your freezer frozen, you can always make goulash to vary the fare. Goulash is 2 cups uncooked macaroni, 1# of ground beef, 1 medium onion, a can of diced tomatoes, salt and pepper to taste. Got milk? It comes in instant powder form, you know. Some of it isn't too bad. Then again... My advice is to try different brands in advance to see what tastes best to you. A disaster is no time to find out you can't eat what you have stored. Several firms sell powdered whole milk.

Of the things I had purchased over the years, some could be replaced by a better brand, but I couldn't see why. I had Rambo 1, a \$99 reproduction that could kill you just as dead as the \$499 Cold Steel Laredo. It held an edge and I don't use a knife as a pry bar.

Do you know something that really irks me? The idea of those stupid 72-hour kits FEMA tells us to have. What are they smoking on their planet? It would take FEMA at least 144-hours to get to the area, if they show up at all. You'd be better off if you double or triple up supplies for your BOB/Evac kit. If something did happen, we'd have to get through it the hard way. Uncle Sugar will not kiss your boo-boo and make it go away. You are responsible for the safety and well-being of yourself and your family. Deal with it!

Will something happen? I'm betting on it! The San Andreas Fault is overdue; Yellowstone is overdue; Cascadia is overdue; Long Valley is probably overdue; and Amy's car payment is for sure overdue. What else? Just the usual suspects: the Islamic Jihadists, everyone cutting off our oil (again), rapidly rising costs for food and fuel, plus that military buildup by Iran, North Korea, Syria, Venezuela, Russia and China for peaceful purposes of course.

Pygmalion: The Pygmalion effect, Rosenthal effect, or more commonly known as the teacher-expectancy effect refers to situations in which students perform better than other students simply because they are expected to do so. Some of us call it a self-fulfilling prophecy. A self-fulfilling prophecy is a prediction that, in being made, actually causes itself to become true; in this it is distinguished from other prophecies.

Despite US and British pressure to disband, the UN team created to investigate Iraqi WMD capabilities before the 2003 war continues to operate, although it has not conducted any inspections since the invasion began, the Washington Post reported Saturday.

The UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission has continued to conduct low-level operations at its New York headquarters, where 20 WMD experts each day examine satellite imagery of Iraq to search for evidence of weapons they may have missed.

Examinations in NY? But... but... if there were any, they'd be in Iraq wouldn't they? God I hope they're not in NY. Once they found the public teat, they became Vampires and were going to drain every last ounce of money from the body. The older I got, the more complicated things got. Example: I had a G85 HP printer with built in fax. It automatically answered, detected color/black and printed the fax. Amy's machine had all the same features, EXCEPT, it was manual. By the time I figured out which buttons to push, the phone would stop ringing. So, I opened the help menu and figured out how to set it up to answer on the 3rd ring. Made life much easier.

I liked (loved) *Apache* and *Sukiyaki*. I liked most of the music from the '50s and '60s, a little from the '70s and even a couple of songs from the '80s. I remembered most of them. Then, tastes changed and if it wasn't country, it wasn't music. The thing about country was that it was dependable; trucks, broken hearts, drunks, unfaithfulness... normal people. John Cash's last song, *Hurt*, really did, hurt I mean, almost made me cry. Watched the video every chance I got. That's the problem some of us have when we get old – we get narrow minded. Probably just me...

It was the first of a series of 'nuclear war/nuclear confrontation' movies that aired within about a year of each other, including *The Day After*, *Threads*, *By Dawn's Early Light*, and the sadly now-oft-forgotten *Countdown To Looking Glass*. You saw it, but you probably can't remember the title... *Special Bulletin*. A TV reporter and cameraman are taken hostage on a tugboat while covering a workers' strike. The demands of the hostage-takers are to collect all the nuclear detonators in the Charleston, SC area so they may be detonated at sea. They threaten to detonate a nuclear device of their own if their demand isn't met. Remember how it ends? I do.

No, Tom didn't quit writing, he found a forum that didn't have language cops. There were some words a person couldn't use. I don't know any of them, though. Don't bring up Hillary Clinton or I may forget I don't know them. She and Osama Obama mostly let Edwards make a fool of himself. He really doesn't need their help. They weren't liberal enough to suit Edwards.

Don't know about the rule of three's. It seems like it takes a website to explain it: threes dot com. But, I didn't see anything there about bad things happening in three's.

Have a look at complexity theory. It is true that most things, whether positive or negative happen in runs or streaks, after all consider the saying 'a run of good luck'. The real knack is not looking at these events as either negative or positive, but simply trying to find something useful to be gained from each situation. The *bad things come in threes* is really a superstition based on the fact people observed they happened in streaks, and possibly they seemed to average out at three to a streak before a change in fortunes. You shouldn't concern yourself with it too much.

That's a relief... here I thought it was an old wives tale... not something real like complexity theory. Is that anything like chaos theory? Yep, Wiki has chaos theory and complexity theory and if Wiki doesn't have it, it isn't catching. Wiki has everything but *The Good News*. That's ok; it's not a religious site.

You're about to find out if I can tell the same story a 54th time and keep your interest. If I do, call me and I'll recommend a good doctor. I'll let you in on a secret; I'm a Methodist (no secret) who believes in Intelligent Design because I believe the Creator wasn't stupid. Seriously, Intelligent Design is the assertion that *certain features of the universe and of living things are best explained by an intelligent cause, not an undirected process such as natural selection*. It is a modern form of the traditional teleological argument for the existence of God, modified to avoid specifying the nature or identity of the designer.

Its primary proponents, all of whom are associated with the Discovery Institute believe the designer to be the Abrahamic God. Intelligent design's advocates claim it is a scientific theory, and seek a fundamental redefinition of science, no longer limited to natural explanations, but accepting supernatural explanations as well. I'll let you in on the real secret – Intelligent Design is really what most of us believe in by another name, forced upon it by the US Supreme Court. When I dreamed it up all on my own in 1962, I called it the 'Spaceman Theory of God'. *Chariots of the Gods? Unsolved Mysteries of the Past* wasn't published until 1968.

Have I missed any toes? I find it better to get that out of the way before I have to turn nasty and shoot a few MZBs (Mutant Zombie Bikers). Well, unless they have a low rider. The Republic of California has some interesting gun laws. Things like assault weapons, M16s, hand grenades are illegal to possess unless you belong to a gang. I hear that MS-13 has the best weapons. They buy US military surplus – \$200 M16s and \$2 hand grenades. The state's definition of an assault weapon is anything they don't want you to have.

Funny thing happened on the way to get the guns. The manufacturers read the new law and removed some non-functional gizmo making the weapons 'California Legal'. Who needs a bayonet lug? If they get close enough you need a bayonet, they're too close. Might be smarter to buy more ammo... if you can find some. It's about a buck per round now and that is mostly foreign military surplus. Even the steel cased crap from Russia is almost as expensive.

And the State of Kalifornia? They can only catch the good guys whose homes happen to catch on fire. It's so bad they don't even trust the cops to have full auto weapons. The police departments buy depot rebuilds from the military which must then be converted to semi auto before they can be issued. That only came about because of the North Hollywood Shootout when 2 guys with body armor and full autos held off the LAPD. They will let the police have high capacity magazines, though. Isn't that nice of the state? Didn't the police department have a designated sniper? Have they heard of a head shot? I might have high capacity magazines on my wish list too. All I have to do is figure out how to get them over the state line. (I prefer to use the UPS.)

According to the story outline, all of the ducks were in a row except for that fallout shelter. If I dig it by hand, it should be done about the time WW IV ends. Anyway, the block wall didn't result from my desire to improve security; it happened because the dogs kept getting out. It's ok, I'll take all the help I can get.

Food – check; Guns – check; Ammo – check; Generator Gasoline – soon; 10w30 oil – check; Radiation supplies – check; Bulletproof office – check; Bomb shelter – soon.

Sharon Packer (Utah Shelter Systems) suggests you can get your own culvert and fix it up for under ten grand (culvert only). However, she has the exclusive North American contract for Andair systems (AV-150 \$5,200 plus shipping). The rule of survival 3's says you can live 3 minutes without air, 3 hours without shelter, 3 days without water and 3

weeks without food. I deleted the 3 months without love because you can go longer. If you go that way, you can dig a hole about half the size and what you save in excavation costs should pay for some of the rock – you need a few loads of rock and have to be able to talk your neighbor into fabricating 2 blast hatches (entrance and emergency exit). If you tell him he can't do it, he might do it just to prove he can. Don't forget those blast valves, unless you have a large supply of batteries and a large inverter.

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Because she put in block walls, the only way to remove the dirt was by hand. The easiest way to do that was to drive to LR and pick up a carload of guys off the corner. They'd work and work hard for \$5 an hour. Thing was, they didn't have any green cards. As opposed as I was to illegal immigration, it was almost too big a chew to chew. They all had CADLs and SS Cards, so what the hell. Necessity overcame all the other choices and I bought more shovels and wheelbarrows. One of the guys had a pickup and offered to haul the dirt and dispose of it. I had to buy his gas. They worked 10 hours a day and I was shocked how fast they hand dug that hole. Half the wheelbarrows of dirt were hauled and half retained.

It was an in and out thing, I figured by the time immigration figured out they were here, they'd be done and none of the illegals living in the housing tract would turn them in. Temporarily I took the attitude, if you can't beat 'em, hire 'em. It turned out that the guy with the truck was close to getting his citizenship the old fashioned way, he learned English and took classes at Antelope Valley College. He did have a green card and was a Permanent Resident Alien. I didn't get their names, but they all answered to Jose, so I numbered them, starting with #1, the legal guy.

I got Chris to check around for used 10' in diameter culvert. I told him I needed 50' and he went looking for it. While Chris isn't Jewish, you can't tell it from his spending habits. I had to pay delivery charges and for the crane to lift the culvert over the house and set it in place on a stand in the hole. He then proceeded to patch the holes and I followed behind with a tar bucket. I'd done that before (in 1955) and didn't like it anymore this time than I had the last time.

Before the final lowering, Chris installed the runners to support the floor in the 10' culvert he got and I tarred those spots. Finally, on a Saturday, he got Dick and Dave to help and the culvert was set in place. I got Jose #1 to arrange to have the rock hauled to the backyard and dumped in, the shelter covered and the spare dirt hauled. Meanwhile, Chris built 2 blast doors out of surplus road plate. When I asked Chris how much I owed him, he chuckled.

"Gary, you're crazy as a loon. I am, however a prudent man. You pay my materials and guarantee us a place to stay if you're not as crazy as I think and we'll call it even. I have as much sweat equity in that tube as you do and that's only right."

"You're right and I do agree. That tube as you call it can support as many as 50 people once it's finished. However, I'll warn you, it will be pretty closed in with that many people."

"Who were you going ask to join you?"

"My family plus your family, Dick, Dave and Lance and Elvia."

"That's not many."

"It could be, it could depend; what if Lance's kids were up visiting when the bubble went up? There are a lot of what ifs, Chris. I have a ton of things to get and install. At the moment, it's just a tunnel in the ground. For example, there's the matter of air, priority number 1. That has intake and exhaust pipes which also include blast valves. Priority number 2 is getting the PowerBOSS down there and hooked up to pipes for intake and exhaust. Those pipes need blast valves. We also need enough fuel stored to either run things or charge the batteries. The shelter needs electrical cooking, a water supply, waste removal and other things."

"I didn't realize how complicated it was. What about your friend Ron? Do you intend to invite him?"

"I will if they have no other place to go. Food isn't a problem, we have enough of that and security isn't a problem, I picked up some things. We are ready for any kind of radiological emergency; once the shelter is finished."

"Can I help?"

"Are you kidding? Chris, I'd love all the help you can give. One thing I know is that I'm not mechanically inclined."

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Chris talked to Dave and Dick and when they weren't busy doing something else, they worked on finishing off the shelter and I acquired materials as money became available. Piece by piece by piece, we finished that culvert, creating a reasonable shelter. While it wasn't something that Mrs. Packer would brag about, it pretty much followed the pictures on the USS website. Rather than worry about plumbing, we ended up with a water tank and a shower, sink and toilet. A small, functional black water tank was installed with a sewage pump to get the water up to the sewer line.

With our payments limited by the refi, we were making ends meet, barely. I had several conversations with Lance explaining what we were doing. He and Elvia had several irons in the fire and weren't really able to participate. Because he was more onboard than not, they were accumulating food, propane, plus additional firearms and ammo, I

limited my suggestions to him getting enough Medical Corps KIO₃ for his family, just in case.

Lance seemed to think that our greatest risk was an earthquake. I pointed out the increasing number of stories and reports in the media that suggested that we'd never been closer to a nuclear war since I didn't know when (November 2, 1983... Able Archer 83). He claimed that he simply couldn't believe that our government couldn't work something out with the other major powers. I agreed, but told him it wasn't the major powers I was concerned about. Iran was talking out of both sides of its mouth over their nuclear program plus North Korea didn't have the money and had their reactor running, again.

Just when I thought I had a handle on everything, Ronald McDonald called.

"Hey."

"Hey what? Hay is the first stage of horsechit, partner. Buy a new elephant gun?"

"As a matter of fact, I did."

"What caliber this time?"

".458 Winchester. Saw an ad on KSL.com and called the guy. He shipped it to High Desert and I just picked it up. I should have priced the ammo."

"Actually I did, Ron, for a story. A box of 20 is over \$100. I've always wanted a Barrett, so I envy you that rifle. I can only see one problem with it."

"Oh?"

"There aren't any elephants in Palmdale."

"True, but it would stop a brown bear dead in its tracks."

"Ron, there aren't any brown bears in Palmdale either. Listen up, I'm not going to repeat myself. Brown bears live in Alaska, east through the Yukon and Northwest Territories, south through British Columbia and through the western half of Alberta. Isolated populations exist in northwestern Washington, northern Idaho, western Montana, and northwestern Wyoming. *Ursus arctos* has existed in North America since at least the most recent ice age, though it is thought that the larger, taller, and stronger giant short-faced bear, also known as the bulldog bear, was the dominant carnivore at the time. The giant short-faced bear was a tall, thin animal adapted to eat large mammals, whereas the grizzly or brown bear has teeth appropriate for its omnivorous diet. The giant short-faced bear, on average, weighed twice as much as the grizzly, despite some exceptional grizzly bears in the later Old West that weighed 800 kilograms."

The Hard Way – Chapter 2

"Right, there aren't any brown bears in Palmdale, thank you for confirming that."

"What do you know about it?"

"Well, for one thing, there are 14 subspecies of brown bears and as many as 3 of the subspecies may be extinct. The California Golden Bear (Grizzly subspecies) has been extinct since 1922. Are you planning on going up north or something?"

"I bought it because of the price."

"I saw the ad, but I looked up the price of ammo before I replied. Did you get reloading dies?"

"Yep."

"Did you remember to buy reloading components?"

"Damn! I forgot to do that"

"But you have to go to Cedar Hill to reload, right?"

"Right. Gar-bear, if I get solids, it should take out a Hummer."

"Why would you want to shoot a Hummer?"

"Don't you read the news?"

"I do, Russia and China are going to attack or Iran is going to build nukes for terrorists to blow us up."

"You haven't heard about the Executive Order Bush signed?"

"I heard. Heck, I even put it in a story as an epilog."

"You still telling stories?"

"What else am I going to do? I don't even change the names to protect the guilty."

"What have you been doing to keep out of trouble?"

"We refi'd the house, I finished my gun collection and survival supplies. I had help, but we finally got a shelter in."

"A genuine in-the-ground, dirt-over-your-head shelter?"

"Well, yeah. I have a few loose ends to tie up, but it's about done."

"Like what?"

"Gasoline for my generator. I have a tank, but it's empty."

"How big is it?"

"2,500 gallons."

"That's almost a ten grand fill up."

"I know; that's why it's empty."

"Don't you have any gas?"

"The tank is full and I have 7 5-gallon cans."

"How long would that last?"

"Just short of 80 hours at half power."

"That would be plenty if the only thing you had to worry about was a short term power outage."

"I agree. Sure would like to have 500 gallons in that tank, though."

"Why don't you get each of the people you plan on sheltering to cough up some dough?"

"They each have a fair amount of sweat equity in it already. Or, haven't you heard, money doesn't grow on trees."

"I'll talk to Lyn, but for a place down there, I suppose we could go 500-gallons."

"Ok, thank you; I'll guarantee you a place."

That got me to thinking... a dangerous thing indeed.

"Lance, Ron is going to add 500-gallons of gas to my tank to guarantee him and his family a place in the shelter. I was wondering if you might be interested in the same deal?"

"500? That's a shade under two thousand dollars. We have the money, but I'd have to discuss this with Elvia. How long could you run on 1,000 gallons?"

"Over 1,800 hours, at half power. Maybe 1,000 hours at full power."

Lance was back the next day. Could he store some of their survival foods in the shelter? I said yes and then he told me they'd go 500 gallons so there was power to keep the food frozen. I told him our freezer was full and he said they had a 14ft³ freezer they'd put in the shelter. I asked if he was worried about something. He gave a one word answer – terrorists.

That worked so good, I caught Dick and Dave at the same time and asked them if they would be interested in a place for 250 gallons apiece. Sharon had told me that through scrimping, we could afford 500-gallons. And I had 1 gallon jug of Pri-G and 4 quarts. Each 500 gallon delivery required 1 quart and I was refilling the quart bottles from the gallon bottle.

Entering the spring of 2008, I had 2,035 gallons of stabilized gas and was still working on Chris. He was reluctant because he flat out told me he'd already earned their place in the shelter and they didn't have 2 grand plus to spare. I told him I wasn't sure we did either, but Lance was worried about something, perhaps a terrorist attack. He said, didn't suggest, that he would add 25 gallons to the tank every time he went racing; more if he won. That would leave the tank 175 gallons short of full if he lost or full if he won. The racing schedule was for 13 races/events. Chris won the point championship 2 years running, but never won a race.

After the feds stopped that bombing plot at JFK last year, I expected a respite from terrorist plots for a while. Lance thought otherwise and the more concerned he became, the more he got into being prepared. He asked if I had a gun safe in the shelter and I told him, it was just a gun rack and I used cable locks. One evening he came over carrying a box and a bag. It was obviously a gun box, from the shape.

"Mind if I store this in the shelter?"

"What do you have?"

"It isn't legal."

"Lance, this is the PRK, nothing is legal here."

"It's a used Colt AR-15 and the bag is full of 30 round magazines."

"Here, take this, it's a spare key to the shelter. Keep it on your keychain. I have a spare trigger lock if you need it."

"No. I bought a cable lock, Gary. I'll be over tomorrow night with the ammo I bought."

For those few who don't know, Lance was a Green Beret Officer in Vietnam. He'd shot both the M14 and later the M16 rifles and was proficient with both. He worked security at Plant 42 and carried an S&W .357 in his job as a Manager there. He was well educated and a thoughtful person. If he said something was going to happen, odds were that he was right. I have learned to trust his opinion.

Thinking back at the terrorist attacks in the US, there was the WTC in '93, Oklahoma City in '95, Atlanta in '96 and WTC/Pent. in '01. We were overdue – I just listed recent events. LA was a time bomb going tick, tick, tick. I don't know why anyone would think this is a peaceful country. I shared a video with Lance and he suddenly found the money to top off the gas tank. It turned out that he had 6 cases of 5.56x45mm ammo and around 1,000 rounds of .357 Gold Dot.

Former Senator Sam Nunn says, "Reducing the risk posed by weapons of mass destruction is not the agenda of one political party. It is a deeply held desire by leaders of vision and courage of every political stripe. We hope that others who are concerned about these issues will work with us on the large area of common ground that exists to find ways to reduce risks associated with these weapons."

He hopes? Wish in one hand and spit in the other, see which one fills the fastest. Yes, Virginia, I'm a fanatic when it comes to nukes and being prepared. There is a reason; when that truckload of ANFO went off in Oklahoma City, it didn't destroy the town. It destroyed one building and killed less than 200 people. 200 too many, but still... one 10kt nuke would kill how many? In layers no less, some outright, some later and some later still, from cancer. It took 5 years to rebuild Hiroshima and Nagasaki. People died from those 15 & 21kt bombs for years.

These beliefs made me a crackpot to most people. In the fall of 2006 I bought 2 980-round cases of SA surplus for \$187 a case plus shipping. That gave me 1,960-rounds. To that I added one more battle pack (\$38.99 plus tax) for a total of 2,100 or 15 battle packs. We shot up 100 rounds on the firing range. I put 18 in each of 10 for a total of 180, leaving me 13 unopened battle packs. That was then and this was now. I should have bought the Australian when Ammoman first had it. Hind sight is 20/20.

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If terrorists were to explode a 15kt nuke in LA, how would that affect us up here in the High Desert? It's as simple and complicated as: which way is the wind blowing? What is the wind speed? A fast wind from 270° would create a long narrow fallout path directly east; a slower wind creates a wider, shorter path.

Next question: what about those refugees? We have two hospitals in the Antelope Valley and they can barely handle the daily traffic. Are we to assume that none of the people coming up the hill will need medical treatment? Do we really have the food, water and medical supplies to handle an influx of sick refugees? How long can the hospital run on their backup power?

The first bomb we dropped had a yield of ~15kt (Little Boy-gun type-HEU) and the second ~21kt (Fat Man-implosion type-Plutonium). The core of Little Boy contained 64 kg of uranium, of which 50 kg were enriched to 89%, and the remaining 14 kg at 50%, with enrichment averaging 80%.

A crudely made gun type bomb made out of enriched uranium could easily go from 10kt to 20kt, depending on the level of enrichment. [At an 80% level we got 15kt, but what if they used 90%?] The only risk in building the simple device is preventing a premature critical reaction. However, in theory they're simple, if not in fact. Since it's apparent from the movie that Obama can pronounce bastard (a discussion of parentage, not cussing), I'm voting for him. Man, that movie really shook me. *Last Best Chance*.

How many millions of pounds of cargo move around LA every day? A million pounds is only 500 tons, a dozen semi loads. Still half focusing on that film, there is no way anyone could prevent the detonation of a nuke in LA by (a) dedicated terrorist(s). That's one reason why being prepared is essential. In the short lived series Jericho, the first clue the residents had was the mushroom cloud. What will your first clue be? Will you fight the panicking throngs of sheeple or will you prepare to survive now?

Then there was this: In the past few days, the anti-Western rhetoric of Russian President Vladimir Putin, which had been rising in pitch for several months, has reached Soviet levels of shrillness. He accused the United States of "imperialism" and "diktat" and threatened to target Europe with new Russian weapons. In an interview with foreign journalists, he cynically mocked Western democracy, saying that US "torture, homelessness, [and] Guantanamo" and Europe's "harsh treatment of demonstrators" have left him as the only "absolute and pure democrat" in the world.

If the Cold War were still on, Western leaders would probably find it relatively easy to rebuff such barbs at today's summit of industrialized democracies in northern Germany. But this is a different era, and Mr. Putin himself will attend the summit, a member of a club – the Group of Eight – in which he clearly doesn't belong. His presence should remind the other seven members of how much has gone wrong in Moscow since they decided in 1998 to offer Russia membership in the hope that it was evolving into a liberal democracy. It should also give them the opportunity to make clear to Mr. Putin that his belligerence will not return his country to great-power status.

Nobody listens, The Cold War Never Ended! The Russians were realigning their ducks, getting them in a new row. They used Capitalism to fund their new efforts. There go our tax dollars at work. Wasn't it nice of us to pay for dismantling their nuclear weapons? They only dismantled the oldest ones then built more. How about the two huge civil defense shelters we paid for in the Ural Mountains? Each of them is reportedly large enough to contain all the land within the Washington Beltway. Then Russia finally figured out they could sell oil and gas to Europe. The rest of the world would buy diamonds, gold or guns. I could be wrong, but I think they sold 50 million AK's to other countries, plus much of their old military equipment.

The Chinese OTOH were selling the world poisoned food and using the money to build a larger Navy and new jets. Had you not read it on page one of the paper you'd wouldn't have believed it. Yet we keep buying billions of dollars' worth of crap from China every year.

NATO needed a larger magnifying glass, they couldn't find bin Laden either. At least the Brits wised up and pulled out of Iraq. That venture did a hatchet job on Tony Blair's reputation.

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To the extent possible, we watched sales and added to the food supply, mostly buying on sale and in large quantities. To watchers, like me, it appeared that someone was turning up the sound. For example:

Ernesto Cienfuegos
La Voz de Aztlán

Los Angeles, Alta California – June 5, 2007 – (ACN) The so called "raging debate" in congress on the Border Security and Immigration Reform Act of 2007 (S. 1348) is irrelevant to the proponents of a liberated Aztlán. It does not matter what final form S. 1348 will take, the quest for real economic and social equality, justice, freedom and for the establishment of a true homeland, north of the border, will continue to exist. The degree of fervor in this quest for Aztlán will be proportional to the number of repressive measures that are included in the final immigration reform bill.

Professor Armando Navarro of the University of California at Riverside has addressed some of the potentially dangerous Senate Bill 1348 amendments which threaten the long term well-being of Mexicanos in Aztlán. Dr. Armando Navarro, author of the book, "The Mexicano Political Experience In Occupied Aztlán: Struggles And Change" declared yesterday that "... Mexicanos and Latinos must be prepared to once again go to the streets." Professor Navarro added, "Regardless what immigration reform is passed either in 2007 or in 2009 or in the future, the "immigration crisis" impacting the US and the Western Hemisphere will not end without major economic change occurring within the "Neo-liberal" economic systems of the Western Hemisphere."

Professor Navarro points out that S. 1348 targets "brown" Mexico and not "white" Canada. It is a racist bill by a US Congress dominated by Anglos/Whites. It provides for a wall and enhances the "militarization" of the US/Mexico border only. Dr. Navarro says that in the proposed bill, "Mexico is treated as if it were an adversary of the US. It is not applicable to the US/Canadian 4,000 mile long border. Border enforcement provisions are paradoxical indicators of a New Cold War – this time directed at Mexico..."

Some aspects of Senate Bill 1348 threaten not just undocumented Mexicanos but also Mexican-Americans and those with legal resident status. Title II of the bill grants immi-

gration enforcement authority to state and local police. This will worsen ethnic and racial profiling which will negatively impact all "brown" people regardless of their citizenship or immigration status. In addition, the proposed implementation of an Electronic Employment Verification System (EEVS) will greatly increase the opportunity for certain employers to discriminate against Americans of Mexican descent. Job applicants with a Spanish surname or with "brown skin" would be required to present documents proving legal status but not Whites.

One of the most sinister proposed amendments to the bill would deny certain deserving legal residents their ability to become voting citizens. The controversial amendment #1184, was introduced by Senator John Cornyn (R-TX). Cornyn's amendment would deny lawful permanent residents the opportunity to become US citizens based on secret evidence. No doubt this provision will be greatly abused by xenophobes within the immigration bureaucracy.

Dr. Armando Navarro, a principal leader of the Aztlán movement, said, "Strategically, the tactical option of once again 'taking to the streets' with the same or greater fury and passion that drove our great mobilizations of 2006 must be concomitantly developed." The struggle to liberate Aztlán has been compared to the struggle of the Palestinians against Zionist Israel. It is no surprise that Dr. Armando Navarro was included in the book, "The Professors: the 101 Most Dangerous Academics" by the pro-Israel Jew, David Horowitz.

The Immigrant Rights Movement must enter a new phase. Along with strengthening the Immigrant Sanctuary effort, the movement must start embracing the tactics of non-cooperation and civil disobedience. These tactics have already proven effective in other parts of the world. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi utilized non-cooperation and civil disobedience to liberate India from the British occupation. La Raza de Aztlán must study and become experts in implementing the political theories of the great Mahatma Gandhi. We do not have to re-invent the wheel.

We must act now! If we do not, there will be dire consequences for us and for our future generations. Just look at what is now occurring in France against their immigrants. For quite some time now, the French white xenophobes have been campaigning against their immigrants from the former colonies. Just last month, the Jew Nicolas Sarkozy won the nations' presidency on the platform of ridding the country of Muslim "scum".

Today, Sarkozy is keeping to his campaign promises. One of the first things Sarkozy did was to appoint the vehement racist Brice Hortefeux to head the newly created Ministry of Immigration and National Identity. This week, Hortefeux reiterated President Nicolas Sarkozy's goal of 25,000 immigrant expulsions by the end of 2007 and set a year-end goal of 125,000 arrests. The very same thing will happen here if we do not act now.

See, the writer agrees with me The Cold War Never Ended, they just added the illegal immigrants. Plus, unless I'm mistaken, we have a few Muslim immigrants. We could cut our population in half if we exported all non-natives. That would eliminate about half the

Muslims, who number 5 million, several million Spanish speakers (Hispanics), and a lot of non-resident aliens. If we don't, I'm afraid it won't be our country much longer.

*"My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrims' pride,
From every mountainside,
Let freedom ring!"*

If we can't keep it, do we deserve to have it?

*"All my bags are packed. I'm ready to go.
I'm standing here outside your door,
I hate to wake you up to say goodbye.
But the dawn is breaking, it's early morn.
The taxi's waiting, he's blowing his horn,
Already I'm so lonesome I could cry.*

*So kiss me and smile for me,
Tell me that you'll wait for me,
Hold me like you'll never let me go.
'Cause I'm leaving on a jet plane
Don't know when I'll be back again -
Oh Babe, I hate to go."*

© John Denver

Leaving on a Jet Plane is a song written by John Denver (good singer, lousy pilot) in 1967 during a layover at an airport in Washington and recorded that year by the Chad Mitchell Trio (also recorded *Your Friendly, Liberal, Neighborhood Ku-Klux-Klan*). It did not become a hit until Peter, Paul and Mary released it as a single in 1969. It turned out to be their biggest (and final) hit.

We have to think about that before we do it, they're better armed than we are. The article also supports my contention that LA is a time bomb. We bought Louisiana (1803) and Alaska (1867). We also made the Gadsden Purchase (1853). We picked up Territory with the Texas Annexation (1845), the Oregon Territory (1846) in a treaty with Great Britain and Mexican Session (1848).

Mexico lost more than 500,000 square miles (about 1,300,000 square km) of land, almost half of its territory. The annexed territories contained about 1,000 Mexican families in California and 7,000 in New Mexico. A few moved back to Mexico; the great majority remained in the US (1848 Mexican War). The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was the unsatisfactory result of Nicholas Trist's unauthorized negotiations. It was reluctantly approved by the US Senate on Mar. 10, 1848, and ratified by the Mexican Congress on

May 25. Mexico's cession of California and New Mexico and its recognition of US sovereignty over all of Texas north of the Rio Grande formalized the addition of 3.1 million km² (1.2 million mi²) of territory to the United States. In return the United States agreed to pay \$15 million and assumed the claims of its citizens against Mexico. A final territorial adjustment between Mexico and the United States was made by the Gadsden Purchase in 1853.

Reconquista was coined as a facetious term, popularized by Mexican writers Carlos Fuentes and Elena Poniatowska, to describe the demographic and cultural reemergence of Mexicans in the southwestern US.

The term is employed almost exclusively by pro-immigration enforcement groups to describe what they perceive as a concerted attempt by Mexicans and Mexican-Americans to wrest away control of United States territory. The premise of this reconquest is an historical claim to the land prior to the presence of European-Americans. The term does not make a claim for Spaniard-Europeans, but rather, for Mexicans, the majority of whom are mixed-blood and full-blood indigenous-blooded people.

The concept has also been advanced by Chicano nationalists of the 1970's to describe plans for the restoration of the vaguely-defined Aztec homeland called Aztlán. These groups do not generally use the word "Reconquista". The word does not properly apply to immigration outside territories lost by Mexico in the Mexican-American War following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

Confused? Take 2 Tylenol and call me in the morning.

It makes one wonder, "Is ANYONE on our side?" Not many, most of them think we're Imperialists. I did a quick count, al Qaeda, other Islamic Extremists, The Reconquista and Nation of Aztlán are against us. After that, come the Major Powers. The next time someone invades France, they can learn a new language and to take baths. The UK may be a different story. That leaves Russia and China and we've looked at them already. I'm defining the Major Powers as the 5 permanent members of the UN. Maybe I should use nuclear powers instead, there are 10, ATM.

Note to self: The entrances to the shelter are too obvious, find a way to camouflage them. That fake flowerbox idea was good, try it. It could work too, the way Chris built the blast doors, the flowerboxes would be symmetrical.

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I supported George invading Iraq. I didn't support him for not winning and deciding to stay. The same applies to Afghanistan. Staying reinforces the idea of the US being Imperialists. Him landing on an aircraft carrier and declaring victory was a good photo op but was hardly accurate. Once again our leaders, on both sides, screw up and our brave troops die.

Factoid: The late-Pliocene to early Holocene Clear Lake volcanic field in the northern Coast Ranges, contains lava dome complexes, cinder cones, and maars of basaltic-to-rhyolitic composition. The westernmost site of Quaternary volcanism in California, the Clear Lake field is located far to the west of the Cascade Range in a complex geologic setting within the San Andreas transform fault system. Mount Konocti, a composite dacitic lava dome on the south shore of Clear Lake, is the largest volcanic feature. Volcanism has been largely non-explosive, with only one major airfall tuff and no ash flows. The latest eruptive activity, forming maars and cinder cones along the shores of Clear Lake, continued until about 10,000 years ago. A large silicic magma chamber provides the heat source for the Geysers, the world's largest producing geothermal field. It's no Supervolcano, but it is hooked up with the San Andreas Fault.

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The joke is, "Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they aren't out to get you." Who are they? We've had trouble with nearly everyone. The Native Americans (the Indians) should win in the end, they have the most casinos and the house has the odds. Do you suppose they'll throw everyone out?

I can tell you right now, we didn't get a chance to find out. Somebody snuck in some nukes. Some probably came from Canada and some from Mexico, while others might have dropped in by parachute for all I know. When they got them is anybody's guess, as is who they got them from. Bomb #1 went to the Capital; #2 to New York; #3 to Chicago, #4 to Denver; #5 to Dallas and #6 to LA. One would assume that they were supposed to all explode at the same time, but the detonations varied by as much as 5 minutes. We didn't get an EAS message telling us to duck and cover. Stations unaffected by the blasts kept broadcasting, guessing mostly. In Palmdale, we were forced to watch CNN, live from Atlanta. CNN reported what they knew, DC and NY. They speculated about other cities then did that breaking news thing when they confirmed another city. I zeroed the CD V-742s and added a battery to the CD V-715 plus 4 to the CD V-717 in the now open shelter. Rifle slung over my shoulder, CD V-715 in hand, I went to each of my neighbors with a place in the shelter.

I didn't have to call Ron, he'd gathered his family, food, weapons and a few other things and they showed up in 3 cars, packed full. I told him to get the 3 boys (John, Kevin and Brenda's husband, Cody) to move it. Even with a fast wind, the fallout would take at least 3 hours to get here. CNN announced that we were at Threat Level Red...really? Seems to me that if the horses ran away, why close the barn door?

The Hard Way – Chapter 3

FEMA is part of DHS and is headquartered in DC. FEMA is home to the National Continuity Programs Directorate (formerly the Office of National Security Coordination). ONSC was responsible for developing, exercising, and validating agency wide continuity of operations (COOP) and continuity of government (COG) plans as well as overseeing and maintaining COOP and COG readiness including the Mt. Weather Emergency Operations Center. ONSC also coordinated the COOP and COG efforts of other Federal Executive Agencies. The National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) was transferred from the Department of Homeland Security to the Department of Health and Human Services, under the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act, signed by President George W. Bush, on December 18, 2006.

The Rex 84 program, short for Readiness Exercise 1984, was an alleged exercise to test the government's response to National Security threats through the internment of citizens. Many theories suggest that FEMA was a participant in this program. Some civil rights advocates and conspiracy theorists claim this program is proof that FEMA's role extends beyond the stated mission of the agency and into the policing of civilians.

Other theories suggest that FEMA maintains internment camps throughout the United States. One popular online video walks viewers through an alleged camp in Beech Grove, Indiana. Conjecture in this arena has led to the development of elaborate conspiracy theories regarding the coming of a "FEMA police state". Since there are two Beech Grove, Indiana...both near Indianapolis, could you please be more specific?

In addition, some conspiracy theorists label FEMA as America's "most powerful organization" due to the nature of the executive orders that are associated with FEMA, orders that have the power to "suspend the Constitution and the Bill of Rights by the stroke of a Presidential pen". If this is true, then FEMA does a great job of looking inept just to keep us off guard.

I don't believe in many of those conspiracy theories, just the ones that make sense. My list is longer than I like and starts with 1963.

Those bombs went off at ~9am EDT, ~6am PDT. I had time and broke open a battle pack and topped off my magazines to a full 20 rounds each.

So, although it was a workday, Monday, Chris was on the way to work, not at work, and no one else had left. He was home in 20 minutes. Luckily, he hadn't made it to Acton on Soledad Canyon Road, yet. Both of my survey meters were on and set to the 0.1 range (500mR). We have a basic 'background' reading of ~30-mR, but that's within the first 10% of the range, hence inaccurate. I gave Sharon the Nuk-Alert to wear because I couldn't hear it anyway. She draped it on a chain around her neck.

Magazines: Although I only had one chest vest, Sharon had given me a bag Christmas 2006 and it held 10 more T-57 magazines. The extras went into my BDU side pockets.

For the sake of appearances, I swapped the 20 round with the legal 10 round. They were hustling, getting everything into the shelter that wasn't normally stored there.

When the survey meter started to indicate a small amount of radiation, everyone got into the shelter and we locked down. While we had local phone, long distance comes through LA and those lines were down. BTW, our cars were safe, Chris pulled some wires from everyone's cars. The cutoff switch for the Edison power was mounted next to the generator so I could cut outside power when it went down and to go to generator power exclusively.

The only thing I wanted that I hadn't gotten was a TS-2000. We were stuck with Ron's CB radios, Chris's racing radios and Dick's 2-meter radio. What, you wanted it to be perfect? Send money...

We voted to forego eating beans while we were in the shelter because Sharon forgot to buy Beano. We also decided to avoid frying many foods because of odors. Nobody was going to go hungry. We have canned chili w/o beans for chili dogs if anyone wants them. The thing I liked about macaroni was you could do so much with it: goulash, macaroni and cheese and macaroni salad. Rice was a great potato substitute and was as versatile as macaroni, maybe more (rice pudding).

Starting on the 0.1 range, we quickly went to the 1x range and then the 10x range and finally the 100x range. The reliable range of the survey meter went from 50mR to 450mR, excluding the first and last 10% of the dial. We didn't get out of the reliable range before the radiation peaked. It was higher than I thought it would go, 395R. That's 46 days to 100mR and 121 days to our 'normal level' of 30mR, in theory.

Since this is story #54, we've been in the shelter probably 100 times. However, unlike the Midwest, this wasn't a storm shelter, it was a fallout shelter. Same principle, but most Midwestern storm shelters wouldn't qualify as a fallout shelter. Most of them don't have 10' of dirt overhead. It is also popular in the Midwest to go to the basement, whether or not it's a good idea.

Because I basically got it put together the way Sharon Packer advised, it was flexible too. This was one of those 'Thank God for Electricity' situations. A small motor and a belt drive kept the AV-150 turning. Had I used batteries, I'd have used gel cells and the special charger. On the same page of her website, she recommended a 2kw diesel generator available from Canada. While she said 1 pint/hr, they said 1¼ L/hr. 1 liter equals 2.11 pints. 1 gallon equals 3.785 liters.

She said not to run a genset underground; I did it anyway, Dick had checked for emissions and leaks and we were good. Plus, she got to sell me the 2 extra blast valves. She does this sheltering thing for a living, thus is the Pro from Dover, I'm the amateur. I guess a person would have to lump Shane Connor in the same category as Sharon Packer.

We didn't talk much at first: 1) people (including me) were scared; and, 2) what was there to say once we ironed out a few details?

Ron broke the silence with, "Ok, no beans. What are we going to have for supper?"

"Chicken salad sandwiches ok?"

"Suits me," I responded.

"Oh, it talks. It can say something besides crap every time it changes the range on that radiation doodad."

"It's a survey meter, asshole. It's a high range meter and goes to 500 Rads."

"What's it say?"

"I don't know."

"Why not?"

"It can't talk. However, the reading on the dial is hovering in the vicinity of 395 Rads."

"What was it when we came down here?"

"55 millirads. If you'll quit sulking, I'll show you how to take readings and where to record them."

Lance smiled, he knew how to use the survey meters. Chris, Dick and Dave were engaged in a conversation with John, Kevin and Cody. I couldn't hear what they were saying because they were to my right. I sure hoped no one brought weed, it would really stink the place up. The official smoking room was on the other side of the hatch in the 4' high tunnel behind the piled up rice and beans.

I'll explain. Although the USS shelter is very good, initial radiation can sometimes turn corners and they recommend that you close off the tunnel with your extra food, like beans and rice. Anything, they say, that is high in hydrogen. "Water, rice or any other material containing large amounts of hydrogen make good shields against initial radiation." I assume they mean bottled water. Sharon Packer keeps beans etc. on a spiffy little cart that she can pull into the entry tunnel to help seal it off. We had a couple of turnoffs from our main tunnel. One contained the toilet and the other the generator.

"Gary, are you getting any indication of how long?"

"Lance, at the moment, we have 395R. If that's the peak level, we'll be down to 99mR in 46 days. My CD V-715 shows a normal background reading of 30mR most of the time

and we'll be there in 4 months. I'm going out at 100mR, regardless, this place cramps my style."

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Excerpts from the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which alone contains the full and definitive descriptions:

Territorial sea - the sovereignty of a coastal state extends beyond its land territory and internal waters to an adjacent belt of sea, described as the territorial sea in the UNCLOS (Part II); this sovereignty extends to the air space over the territorial sea as well as its underlying seabed and subsoil; every state has the right to establish the breadth of its territorial sea up to a limit not exceeding 12 nautical miles; the normal baseline for measuring the breadth of the territorial sea is the mean low-water line along the coast as marked on large-scale charts officially recognized by the coastal state; the UNCLOS describes specific rules for archipelagic states.

Contiguous zone - according to the UNCLOS (Article 33), this is a zone contiguous to a coastal state's territorial sea, over which it may exercise the control necessary to: prevent infringement of its customs, fiscal, immigration, or sanitary laws and regulations within its territory or territorial sea; punish infringement of the above laws and regulations committed within its territory or territorial sea; the contiguous zone may not extend beyond 24 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured (e.g. the US has claimed a 12-nautical mile contiguous zone in addition to its 12-nautical mile territorial sea).

Exclusive economic zone (EEZ) - the UNCLOS (Part V) defines the EEZ as a zone beyond and adjacent to the territorial sea in which a coastal state has: sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the natural resources, whether living or non-living, of the waters superjacent to the seabed and of the seabed and its subsoil, and with regard to other activities for the economic exploitation and exploration of the zone, such as the production of energy from the water, currents, and winds; jurisdiction with regard to the establishment and use of artificial islands, installations, and structures; marine scientific research; the protection and preservation of the marine environment; the outer limit of the exclusive economic zone shall not exceed 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured.

1 nautical mile equals ~2,025 yards or ~1.15 statute miles or ~6,076', or exactly 1,852 meters. 200 nautical miles is ~230 statute miles.

I can tell you that the AK-74M along with earlier AK-74/AKS-74 is the standard shoulder arm of the Russian Army. The plans of replacing it with the widely advertised Nikonov AN-94 assault rifle were not carried out to any significant extent – the AN-94 is (and most probably will be) issued only to most elite units of the Russian Army, police and

the Internal Affairs Ministry troops. Both are 5.45x39mm firearms. The total number of the AK-type rifles made worldwide during the last 50 years is estimated at 100+ millions.

Gomer would say, "Surprise, surprise, surprise."

◦

"Aren't you worried about getting cancer?"

"At our age? I've been looking for a place to lie down and die for a long time. Lance, I'm tired. We'll be able to leave at 104mR, but I'll wait the 46 days. Once that comes, I'm leaving. The early bird gets the worm and there are a few worms I need."

"It seems to me you have plenty of food. You have the nice M14 rifle, the pistol and shotgun, what else do you need?"

"Are you familiar with MCLB, Barstow?"

"Up there next to Ft. Irwin? Sure, I know the place, but it will be guarded. If you go there and take anything, it would be looting and it's likely you'd get shot."

"I think it will depend on what it's like when we get out. For all we know, WW III could have happened or will happen before we get out."

"I'll take a watch, 4 hours?"

"That should be ok. I'll train Ron on my shift and he can relieve you. I'll take the late shift because I'm a night owl."

"Ok. Now, what exactly do you want at Barstow?"

"More ammo to begin with. Hopefully some M16s with grenade launchers. 40mm grenades, hand grenades, machine guns if they're available and belted ammo. The stuff that a soldier would have in combat, I guess. If there's law and order when we come out, I'll settle for what we have. If there isn't and we have to deal with the local gangs, LA gangs and a bunch of thugs, I rather arm up than not. Would you rather we have it or leave it for the MZBs?"

"Do you know anything about M16s or hand grenades?"

"No, no, I don't, but you do. What's to know about a hand grenade? I have the Field Manual on my computer and for current issue hand grenades, you remove the safety clip, pull the pin and loft it down range, right?"

"Do you think you can throw one far enough not to blow yourself up?"

"I won't know until I try. I can toss one with the pin in and the clip on and find out, can't I?"

"Yes, I suppose you could, if you get some."

"It will be about 6 weeks plus before we find out. So far the only things that I have that are illegal are my high capacity magazines and the Taurus PT1911B. If we don't need to go any further than that, it's fine by me. If we do, I'm more than willing to risk the 75 mile drive to Barstow to try and find what we need."

"But you don't drive."

"I don't have a license; I do drive. We're going to need to find someplace we can get one or more ham radios too. I've got 2 or 3 sets of yellow pages; I'll have to look for one. Hey, Ron. Come over here and I'll show you the process we do while were on duty."

"All right already. What's the big deal?"

"No big deal. I have a log I started as soon as we came down here and locked the hatches. Every 15 minutes you get the reading off the meter and write the time and reading in the log. If you're on when a date change occurs, add that. We've been holding at about 395 Rads for some time, which could be the peak. Lance is going to relieve me at 2pm and you can relieve him at 6pm. Get me up to relieve you at 10pm if I'm not already awake. Best guess is about 46 days, but that's still uncertain."

"Who relieves you, Gar-Bear?"

"I'll talk to the other three and they can decide."

"Does that include John and Kevin?"

"Maybe John... but not Kevin. I also won't include Amy or Brenda, We need them to watch their kids. We might ask David. That would make 8 with John or 9 with John and Cody. If we kept 4 hour schedules, we could even rotate the schedules."

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There was some grouching over the diet, although everyone initially agreed. We did a Gunny Highway and decided on steaks on Saturday nights. Much of the cooking was accomplished using crock pots, they used very little electricity and with 3 large models to use, we could feed everyone. It also allowed the introduction of more meats into our diet. For some reason adding more meat eliminated friction.

Time Warner stayed on, but not 24/7 for the first 3 weeks after the attacks. Their radiation readings were close enough to mine to be encouraging. At first, they had a problem getting satellite feeds, but as the radiation died off and alternate suppliers were found,

we had something to watch besides CNN. I can understand getting only CNN at first, the cable company and the broadcast network are part of the same company.

After 3 weeks, we suddenly lost cable TV. It was working fine the night before when we turned it off, but the next morning there wasn't a channel on the air, not even CNN. We could get KTPI with broadcasts originating from Tehachapi during the same time – it wasn't up anymore either.

"What happened to the news?"

"Good question, Dave, darned if I know. I guess we'll just have to watch movies. You know, KTPI is off the air too."

"Have you eaten?"

"I had cereal and powdered milk. Are you my relief?"

"Yes."

"Fine, I'm sacking out."

Because someone was always sleeping, a real effort was made to keep the noise down in the shelter. That tin plated tube echoed like you can't imagine. Thankfully we'd sound proofed the little generator offset. Then, once we were past the midpoint, like on the 24th or 25th day, moods brightened and I heard the term short timer used more than once. I tried to explain that anyone of child bearing age or younger would have to spent a majority of their time in the shelter until we reached the 120 day mark.

Radiation workers under regulatory standards can be exposed to 5,000millirem annually (5rem). However, since our 'normal' background seemed to be 30mR, I raised that to 30×365 or 11R. I know it's wrong, but we don't have any meters like the CD V-700 which are Geiger counters with a maximum range of 50mR. Darn, another thing I should have bought. While we couldn't trust our meters at low ranges, we could trust my spreadsheet, it was built using the seven-ten rule and with careful use, you could compute things down to the minute using extrapolation.

There are 24×60 minutes in a day (1,440). Multiply the fraction of a day by 1,440 or the fraction of an hour by 60, then round up to the next hour, just in case. About now, I was really regretting not buying a ham radio. By the time I bought the radio, a pair of antennas, a mast or tower, coaxial cable, lightning arrestors and all the extra stuff, it would have run between 2 – 2½ grand and we'd run out of money.

In a way, I'm almost glad we didn't know. A film depicting the invasion of the United States from the north and south by communist forces from Cuba and Russia in the beginning of WWII and the efforts of partisans from a small mid-western town (Calumet, CO) to turn back the invasion. This film is based on the belief that citizens militias and

patriot groups will arise if there is an invasion and about the possibility of a UN takeover of the US. The movie and the theory of the New World Order proposed by the militias are similar, invasion by a foreign force, a big gun grab, arrest of gun owners, military equipment being moved on railroads, enemy helicopters re-education facilities (concentration camps), and a citizen force that strikes back. The plot for the movie, a Russian invasion from Mexico, etc., was based on CIA and War College studies of US weaknesses at the time.

Red Dawn, right? Wrong! The United States of America 2 days after the terrorist attacks. If I had purchased the TS-2000 or any ham radio, I might have heard that and we might have been prepared for what faced us at 46 days. It wasn't the same as the movie, though. They came in on container ships, not parachutes. Their Naval vessels lay off the coasts, outside the 24 nautical mile (nm) limit. The US claims: 1) territorial sea – 12 nm; 2) contiguous zone – 24 nm; and, 3) exclusive economic zone – 200 nm.

It's finally undeniable. America's very existence as a free nation is threatened by a full-scale illegal invasion from the south. The nation's transformation from what once was a unified Judeo-Christian culture into an angry cauldron of squabbling groups and nationalities grows daily. What is the US government's response to this momentous threat to America's national survival? Excuse it, legalize it and encourage it!

Why is the federal government doing this? How can Americans stop it? And most importantly, what is the right way to deal with the nation's overwhelming and ever-worsening illegal immigration problem?

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich calls the government's current effort to fix the problem "madness." Pat Buchanan and David Limbaugh both call it "suicide."

And President Theodore Roosevelt, looking forward through the decades to today, warned us sternly: "The one absolutely certain way of bringing this nation to ruin, of preventing all possibility of it's continuing to be a nation at all, would be to permit it to become a tangle of squabbling nationalities."

Yet today's government, by allowing and indeed encouraging a Third World immigrant invasion of the United States – encouraging it by offering endless incentives like Social Security, food stamps and free education, as well as refusing to enforce existing immigration laws – is overseeing a radical conversion of America.

According to the movie, Cubans invaded across the border and went to work on US military bases. When TSHTF, they tore the bases a new butt. The movie was WW III w/o nukes, interesting. Let me tell you, we haven't determined if that's how this happened, yet; but, I wouldn't be surprised.

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I was the first one out of the shelter, man it was a bear getting me and my gear up the stepladder that comprised the steps of the main entrance tunnel. The CD V-715 confirmed what the CD V-717 read, give or take maybe 50mR. I moved around the house and saw leaflets in the driveway. I picked one up and read it.

Attention

The states of California, Arizona, New Mexico and portions of Texas are now under the control of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Cuba and the Republic of Venezuela.

All residents are advised to check in at their local Community Center for identification and registration. If you have any firearms and/or ammunition, it must be turned in when you register. Failure to comply will result in imprisonment and/or death.

"What the heck?"

"It seems to me we watched this movie the other day, *Red Dawn* wasn't it?"

"I hear gunshots."

"You don't suppose it's the Wolverines, do you?"

"I don't believe that any of the 8 High Schools in the District use the team name Wolverines."

"They don't," Lance added to the conversation.

"Still, in its day, the Antelope Valley was filled with several paramilitary groups, Lance. You don't really believe that any of those people obeyed the Kali law, do you?"

"We'd better hope not. Offhand, I'd say this takes care of your trip to Barstow."

"I'd imagine so. However, it's possible that there was so much stuff up there, they left it in place and put in their own guards. Either that or the Marines are still fighting them."

"That Marine contingent is about 2 Companies or so, right?"

"I think I read a combination of 500 Navy and Marines."

"Battalion strength. If we try to go there, it will mean using every back road in the area."

"Now you're for it?"

"When we talked about it, I was assuming normal times. This doesn't seem to qualify."

"Maybe we'd better go back down and explain what we found to everyone."

"I'll grab some of those pamphlets, Gary."

o

"What's wrong?"

"Here, read this."

"What does it mean?"

"We have been invaded, again. I, for one, am not about to believe a piece of paper. We heard gunshots when we were up top and it suggests that the situation isn't contained. Ron only has enough ammo to supply his weapons once with a reload. Since some of it is non-military caliber, finding more could be a problem. Right after we came down here, a month and a half ago, I mentioned going to Barstow to Lance. At the time he didn't think it was a very good idea. Now, I think he has changed his mind."

Ron spoke next, "I have enough handguns and rifles to equip everyone. The thing I'm short on is ammo. I have about 30 of the 50 round boxes of .223. For my other rifles, maybe two boxes each. Altogether, I have about 500 rounds of handgun ammo, 9mm, .38 special and .357."

"I have my .223 and my .357 plus plenty of ammo," Lance added.

"Half the country knows what I have. I have my M1A, the PT1911B .45 and the Mossberg 590A1. There are just short of 4,000 rounds of rifle ammo, 750 rounds of shotgun ammo and 2,000 rounds of .45ACP. I'll take the pistol and my rifle. Chris, do you want the shotgun? You don't have any guns."

"Can Ron let me have a pistol?"

"I can, Chris," the gravelly voice replied. "I said I could equip everyone, to some extent."

"What do you want to do Lance?" (I asked Lance because he was the only one of us with combat experience.)

"Late in the day, right around sundown, we do a little recon work and if we can clear town, we'll go to Barstow and recon some more."

Sharon couldn't pull the slide on my .32 and I gave that and the Mossy to Amy to use. I told her to keep the lid on the shelter and keep everyone inside until we got back from Barstow. Ron gave Brenda a .357 and one of his .223 bolt action rifles. Amy can be just plain mean and between you and me, Brenda isn't far behind. Once we determined

whether or not we could get supplies, there were people to think about and maybe a radio to find.

The Hard Way – Chapter 4

Elvia has two kids, Joseph and Erica, both of whom are married and living in LA. Dick and Dave each have 2 kids, a boy and girl and two girls, respectively. Dick's daughter was married, but I didn't know about the others. I have no idea where they live. Both Dick and Dave have campers, Dick's is a trailer and Dave's is a motor home. They both had pickups, as did Lance.

While I had only practiced with my rifle out to 100 yards, I knew the number of clicks of elevation to put in, thanks to Derek and the guy at the range. Plus 3 clicks for every 100 yards beyond 200 yards. I don't see so well in the dark anyway. Over the course of the day, I fussed making sure that my weapons were ready, even if I wasn't. Anywhere between point blank range and 200 yards used the same setting, I wouldn't be changing the sights.

Right around 7pm, Lance told us to saddle up. Then he told Chris to put the wires back in the 3 pickups because we'd take those. There would be 9 of us going, if we went, and we'd try to fill the 3 pickups with supplies. He also explained that he'd been to Barstow once or twice and he had a fair idea where the office was where we'd find inventory lists.

Thirty minutes of recon failed to disclose anyone out and about. There were still occasional gunshots from the Westside, but far fewer than earlier in the day. I think I heard 3, or was it 4? Lance and Dave left in Lance's little green pickup, but didn't say where they were going, scouting maybe.

"As far as we could tell, the coast is clear. Dave says he knows a way to Barstow that isn't frequently traveled."

"Load up. Gary, you ride with me, Ron you ride with Dick. The rest of you fill in holes as you find them."

Ninety minutes later, we were on the outskirts of Barstow. By that time, it was fully dark, requiring headlights. However, they didn't turn on the headlights and they avoided all of the main streets that they could.

"We're here."

"It's pitch black out there."

"Did you ever see it when it wasn't lit up?"

"Now that you mention it... no."

"If there was anyone here, they would have some lights, this facility has backup power."

MCLB, Barstow was utterly vacant. I thought I spotted blood on the ground with my flashlight, but it could have been tar. About the only thing I saw out of the ordinary were lots of shell casings, including but not limited to, .223, .308 and .50BMG. Chris used the crowbar he brought to open the door Lance pointed out. We stood guard while the two of them went inside. When they came back, Lance had a book-thick sheaf of papers and told us to follow him.

He started in a warehouse and we got new style Kevlar helmets and night vision (AN/PVS-14). Another warehouse produced weapons, M16A3s, M16A4s, M40s, M14s, M203s, M9s and a few M1911s, plus magazines. A third produced machineguns, M249, M240B, M240G, Mk-46 and Mk-48s, and Her Highness, Ma Deuce. The Mk46 and Mk-48 are adapted M-249s. He then led us to a bunker and we loaded up unbelted ammo. A second bunker provided belted ammo and a third 40mm and hand grenades. The fourth made me drool, it had cases of LAW rockets. We returned to the warehouses and found Interceptor body armor and some of that new MCCUU in Desert Marpat. Hey, that Interceptor stuff is heavy.

By 3am we had what we wanted, that we could find, and headed back to Palmdale. I mainly had more magazines for my M1A, and the M14 I latched onto, and ammo. I had assorted hand grenades including smoke, thermite, concussion and fragmentation. In order to have a M203, I'd have to take a M16, and I refused on principles. As far as I knew, there weren't any poodles in our housing tract.

We were ok most of the way back. Near the intersection of Avenue G and 50th Street East, we saw headlights. It was a full moon and we had returned slowly, without lights, once we turned onto Avenue G. Those night vision devices nearly turned night into day and with the moon, we had enough light. Lance turned into a driveway and Dick and Dave followed. We then proceeded to hunker down and wait for the vehicle to pass. After 30 minutes, it hadn't and we resumed the trip home, very slowly.

When we finally got to the housing tract, we began to haul out our loot and Chris disabled the vehicles again. The loot ended up in my garage via the side door. Normally the platform in front of the washer and dryer blocks that door and I had slipped in and moved it until we were done. Then, I dropped it in place figuring that if someone had been here before, they know the door was blocked. The house wasn't locked anyways; they could get into the garage that way.

We had enough of the uniforms to provide for everyone except the kids; Linda, Amy and Sharon (had size issues). I even found a pair of the desert boots the Marines wear. The Marine Corps now requires tan rough-out combat boot, either hot weather or temperate weather versions. I think these are the hot weather version.

Tucked away in our hideaway, and now equipped, we discussed what we needed to do besides praying. Our present problems were a lack of information, first, and an inability to communicate with the outside world, second. Dick said he could fire up the generator in his trailer to provide power to his 2-meter rig. At this moment in time, we'd read a

handbill claiming the US had been invaded and had started our looting, successfully I might add. There wasn't an adult in the shelter who was interested in surrendering unless maybe it was Chris and Patti. However, they didn't dare say anything.

"We can't leave the things we got in your garage. Does anyone have any idea where we could move them?"

"We can store some of them above the lid of my garage, Lance. When we put it in, it was 24" on center and the building inspector said the maximum was 16" on center. The easiest solution was to add extra runner, 12" on center. I believe the overhead will support a fair amount of weight. There is about 18" of blow in insulation we can move and cover the stuff once it's up there. We could put some stuff in the shelter and some in the shed behind that stack of plastic boxes."

"I think we should spread it out and not put all of our apples in one basket, Gary. I have all that wood in my garage and we could bury some of it under that," Dick suggested.

"How many M16s did you get?"

"We picked up 12 M16A3s, 36 M16A4s and 12 M-203s. We have more than enough MOLLE (MODular Lightweight Load-carrying Equipment) for everyone – one complete setup per rifle," Lance replied. "Say, Gary, can you answer a question?"

"If I know the answer, yes I can."

"What's this fascination you have with M-72 LAWs rockets?"

"Oh that? I liked the movie, *The Enforcer*."

"That's it?"

"Yeah, the M136 AT-4 is better but it weighs 3 times as much. I may have to leave out the plates and leave my extra ammo at home as it is."

o

In Clint Eastwood's 3rd Dirty Harry movie, the one with Tyne Daly, they attended a demo firing of the M-72 LAW. You may remember Harry pulling her out from behind the rocket just before the demonstrator fired it. I have the Field Manuel (FM 3-23-25) for the LAW and the darned thing is so simple, I believe that even I can use one.

a. To extend the rocket launcher –

1) Remove the pull pin and rotate the rear cover downward so the front cover and adjustable sling assembly can fall free. Do not discard the sling assembly until after you fire the rocket.

2) With your firing hand, grasp the rear sight cover; with your non-firing hand, grasp the launcher forward of the barrel detent. Pull your hands sharply in opposite directions to extend the launcher. To ensure the launcher is fully extended and locked, try to close it.

b. To fire the rocket launcher, raise it slightly above shoulder level, rotate your body under it, and place it on your shoulder. Check the back blast area, pull the trigger arming handle to the ARM position, aim the launcher, and depress the rubber boot on the trigger bar firmly to ensure the launcher fires. (If the trigger arming handle will not remain in the ARM position, the launcher is not fully extended.) Pressing the trigger bar causes the firing pin to strike the primer, which ignites the black powder in the flash tube, which in turn ignites the propellant in the rocket motor.

Questions? Read the Field Manual, I haven't fired one, yet.

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People can't live/operate in a vacuum. In 2008, an information vacuum was as bad a disaster as anyone could imagine. The reason was a combination of events, the terrorist bombs and those darned leaflets. No one would believe a piece of paper would hurt them, other than a paper cut, but it was the words on those papers combined with the occasional gunshots. It was more than obvious to everyone except the kids that we had to go out there and gather information.

When we got back from Barstow, Amy told me that she and Brenda stood watch while all the women and kids had a shower. Lance had it right when he insisted we go to Barstow before we did anything else. We also knew that the electricity was out because Chris and Dick checked their homes. No lights, no phone but we did have gas and water. The Palmdale Water District generates its own power. While we visited I had the valve open filling the tank. Our hot water heater had a pilot light instead of the electrical igniter and there was hot water to bathe if you wanted to do it in the dark or by candle light. After our meeting, we men got a quick shower and change of clothes. The Brown family was divided up among us. We didn't want them to leave the tract.

"Let's stay out here for a little while; I need a few doses of nicotine."

"Those leaflets are everywhere. Gar-Bear it's almost like someone dropped them from an airplane."

"Could be Ronald, I thought I saw some on our roof. Did you see any vehicles other than the one up on Avenue G?"

"I saw what you saw. Thing is, we haven't been west of this tract since the attack. We heard gunshots but that could have been the Sheriff's Deputies dealing with trouble-makers."

"But why no traffic? We usually have one or more patrol cars pass by every hour."

"If they were dealing with troublemakers, why would they be out patrolling? You have to figure that refugees poured out of LA in all directions. Given the prevailing winds, the people who headed towards Ventura or north on I-5 were likely the best off."

"I've had nightmares of people coming up 14 from Santa Clarita and San Fernando Valleys; pouring through pass into the Antelope Valley. It's only about 40 minutes up the freeway, even with heavy traffic."

"Maybe if people weren't panicked, that is. You've seen how they drive in normal times, add a dose of panic and stir well. How do you see it under those circumstances?"

"It's probably a parking lot about 30 miles long and 3 lanes wide."

"Plus it's uphill the whole way. People in western Santa Clarita have two choices, I-5 north or Bouquet Canyon."

"That's Saugus and Valencia primarily and most of them work in LA. They wouldn't have left for work either."

"Do we know where in LA the bomb went off?"

"We probably would if someone had a ham radio."

"Well, excuse me, I ran out of money."

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These days, the US military generally uses satellites for reconnaissance. When they need Humint, most of the work is done by Special Ops teams like the Army's Special Forces, the Navy's SEALs or Marine Corp Force Recon. Unlike Vietnam where we might insert a small 2 man force on a LRRP, current doctrine seems to be recon in force. Although the implication is recon teams try to stay out of sight and avoid confrontations, there is that thing they call recon by fire. In Iraq and Afghanistan, given the nature of battle – 4th Generation War – recon by fire became commonplace.

Lance was somewhere between a 3rd Generation and 4th Generation soldier. He was a Special Forces Captain in 'Nam, but he followed the news and shared some things with me. I let him read my piece on 4th Generation Warfare for something to do during the 46 days.

The closest I ever got to actually doing any recon was watching Combat starring Vic Morrow. In 1962, \$5,000 a week was good money – that's what they paid him. In the last gig he did, they didn't pay him enough. Just before the shoot, he said it was risky and he should have asked for a stunt double. Famous last words!

Sierra Highway is roughly 7th Street East, or 40 blocks west of our housing tract. I've walked to it and it's a very, very long way. We had running vehicles and the battery in my wheelchair was new, I wasn't walking anywhere. The wheelchair wasn't a good idea, Chris hadn't equipped it yet.

The only people still alive in Palmdale would be those who found shelter, 395R/hour will kill anyone. Lance said we had to determine if the leaflets were true and try and find a ham radio, antenna and coax. He disabused the notion of recon by fire because if the leaflet were true, we'd be outnumbered and outgunned. Maybe I had a death wish, undetermined, but I refused to wear the body armor. Think about it, 1,000 rounds of .308 weighs 66 pounds compared to the 20+ pounds for the Interceptor. Three LAWs rockets weigh ~15 pounds.

While Chris was decidedly unhappy, he went along, carrying an M-9 and an M16. The others generally outfitted themselves with M16s and either M-9 pistols or one of Ron's handguns. I use pistol to denote a semi-auto like the M1911 and revolver to denote wheel guns. Ron's .357s were all revolvers.

Ron and I each had: 1 rifle (M1A or M14), 1 pistol (M1911 type), 6 M61 hand grenades and 3 M72 LAW rockets. We also had extra bandoleers carrying 5-round stripper clips of 7.62x51mm ammo. It was night and we all dressed in dark clothing. The plan was to take one pickup on each of Avenue R, Avenue Q and Avenue P traveling west, without headlights. I was in the pickup that went across on Avenue P (Rancho Vista). I had it in mind to make a stop along the way, time permitting. Ron was in the pickup taking Avenue Q and I do believe he had similar plans (except he had a different store in mind).

o

At this point, I ask you to stop and think. Around 6am, terrorists set off a nuke in LA and the wind is out of the southwest. You live in Palmdale, about 2-3 hours northeast of LA as the wind blows. You don't know jack crap about radiation, other than it can kill you. What would YOU do? I'll help, you either shelter or you bug out. A man could have gotten rich that morning selling bug out bags and 5 gallon cans of gas. Five gallons of gas should get you to Bakersfield. The population is under 200,000 and the total Antelope Valley population ~500,000, give or take. Palmdale has few bomb shelters because of the San Andreas. Only idiots build bomb shelters in earthquake country.

What we didn't know was that the wind had shifted slightly, carrying some fallout all the way to Barstow. The Mayors of Lancaster and Palmdale got together with the School District and provided school buses to haul people without transportation. Seems they didn't want the buses to get flooded, with radiation. Listen up Ray, I'm talking to you! Not only did I not get ham radios, I didn't get a weather station because I would have bought it from the same place, either HRO or AES.

What we learned on our recon was: 1) there weren't any vehicles because 99% of the people had bugged out; 2) the gunshots were a few remaining Sheriff's Deputies engaging looters; and 3) Santa Fe Gun Galleria and High Desert Storm hadn't been looted, yet.

Lance asked the Deputies he ran into about the utilities, food and gas (gasoline). He was told that a Deputy would accompany him and he could take what he needed from grocery stores as long as a list was made and given to the Deputy. Utilities would be on when they were on and not before. Lance didn't ask about firearms and ammunition, this was still the PRK. Strange thing was that with the loss of power, those backup batteries on alarm systems were dead. Even if they weren't dead, most people used a phone line to the alarm company or Sheriff's Substation.

Ron got a Beretta Stampede, .45LC 5½" barrel, a holster and belt and 13 50-round boxes of ammo. I chose better, I got: 4 Browning Hi-Powers, 4 Ruger Vaquero revolvers in .45 Colt, 1 7½", 2 5½" and 1 4⅝", 1 M1A Loaded (w/ sling from another showcase), 12 battle packs of SA surplus and all the .45 Colt and 9mm ammo they had in stock. Plus a used, plain black gun belt for a Vaquero with the 7½" bbl., a 24" .45 Colt Winchester, 7 Mossberg 590A1s and 7 Mini-14s. In the back room, I found high capacity magazines that he kept on hand for law enforcement. For example, I found genuine Ruger 20 round magazines for the Mini-14s. I'm sure that M1A was the one I looked at back in 2006 before I went to High Desert Storm and bought the one I have.

Since he stocks a bunch of LEO equipment, I helped myself to some collapsing batons, S&W handcuffs, pepper spray, and a Sam Brown belt with a holster for the M1911. Had I known that Lance would run into a Deputy, I'd have made a list of the stuff I got, for my own amusement. After the recon trip, we all returned to our homes, distributing our booty from Barstow among all participants. It turns out those leaflets had been someone's idea of a sick joke. We didn't need the Russians, the Deputy joked; we already had the Mexicans.

Within a week, power was restored as was local phone service. With the restoration of power, all the media outlets with staff were back on the air. During those 46 days and the week or so that followed, the trust had made two income distributions to our checking account. Now that we didn't need the money, we had some. Maybe I can afford to get a head start on next time.

I guess with mail service restored, life was back to normal. Not! Anyone who lived in Palmdale and worked in LA was out of work. That was about 85% of the working people who lived in Palmdale. When you think about it, it didn't matter because they were still bugged out. It was worse than the Northridge earthquake. I can still remember getting shaken awake, the closet door rattling and turning on the TV to watch Balboa Boulevard burning. Afterwards, there was a hole in the street about 70' deep, if memory serves.

Several hospitals were in the area and damaged. As a result, California passed a law requiring reinforcement of the ERs and critical care areas by 1/1/2005. At least one

hospital ended up closed as a result, Grenada Hills. It also explained why AV Hospital completely rebuilt those areas at their hospital.

The approximately 250,000-squarefoot Palmdale Regional Medical Center is now under construction on 37 acres near Tierra Subida (10th St W) and Palmdale Boulevard. Universal Health Services, or UHS for short, is building this full service hospital in Palmdale at no expense to the taxpayers of the Antelope Valley. Universal Health Services will invest \$90 to \$100 million in the Palmdale Regional Medical Center.

The new hospital is scheduled to open in 18 to 24 months and will feature OB/GYN services, pediatrics and general medical care. It will have a 35-bed emergency room. The emergency room will double the current number of emergency room beds in the Antelope Valley and will be the largest emergency room in the area. In addition to the 35-bed emergency room the hospital will initially open with 171 beds, comprising 32 intensive care beds; 108 medical surgical, telemetry, pediatric beds; 25 obstetrics beds; and six neonatal intensive care beds.

Universal Health Services plans to add 32 intensive care and 36 medical surgical beds in the near future for a total of 239 beds. All beds are in private rooms, providing better hospital efficiency and patient comfort.

Sorry, that is an old article that came out in 2005. The hospital was open before the attack on LA. As far as I knew, it was still open, but with people bailing out the only way we'd know was to either go check or have someone get hurt and need it. The hospital offered such poor care, ambulances rarely took patients to it. I guess we jumped the gun on looting, but hey, we might not get another chance. My supply cabinet was emptied out to provide a place to store the things I had that weren't sealed in boxes out of reach of Audrey, Udell and Jeffrey. Just the normal stuff you find laying around the house, LAW rockets, hand grenades and stuff like that.

Lance insisted I take an M16 after things began to sort out. His reasoning was that it was the only way I could get a 40mm grenade launcher. I said ok, provided I got sealed boxes of grenades. I could put the cable lock through the action of the M16, but wasn't sure where to get one long enough for the M-203. We stored all but one box of my 40mm grenades in the shelter and kept it locked.

I'm in favor of an immigration policy that would force all of them to return home and apply for re-admittance. That would give us time to build a great big wall, plant mines, dig trenches (filled with snakes), the usual stuff.

Sharon got us caught up on the mortgage, by mail, and we went shopping, making a list as we went. The Deputy went with all of us to Sam's Club, Costco and Wal-Mart. He didn't find it funny that I wanted to keep the list. I told him he could trust me. Word was someone had looted High Desert Storm and Santa Fe Gun Galleria. Whoever it was took a lot more from SFGG than from HDS. When Sandy came back, Ron and I went in

and contributed to the fund that had been started to reimburse Sandy for the theft. I think she got more back than she lost.

You never guess who I ran into? Gunny!!! He was there buying ammo and we got to talking and the next thing you know, I bought 4 cases of .45 Colt. She asked what I had and I told her I had an Uberti 1873 Cattleman SA Revolver and an Uberti 1892 24" rifle. That seemed to satisfy her although a Beretta Stampede is an Uberti and I had Rugers and a Winchester.

We made a pass by the new hospital and it was open but with limited staff. That made it more like AV Hospital which never had enough staff. As soon as the stores reopened (Costco, etc.) they sent out a bill for what we had taken during our shopping trip. We hadn't actually gotten much, just enough to replace what our visitors had eaten; we had the money but people who worked for a living didn't and had to sign payment plans. I couldn't figure out what good that would do, if you weren't working, how could you make payments?

Patti explained that due to the high levels of unemployment, what you really signed was an interest bearing note at 7.5% (APR) interest. I had to agree, it was cheaper than a credit card. I lost my credit card because Sharon didn't pay the \$65 annual fee that they didn't tell us about when I got it.

When the AV Press resumed publishing, we learned that someone(s) had broken into MCLB, Barstow and stripped the place. I told you how much we took, 3 pickup loads. Apparently we weren't the only people to visit Barstow, just the first. It was dispersed and they'd need probable cause for search warrants. For the moment, we figured we were safe.

We were quickly approaching the 2008 elections. The field had narrowed to Clinton and Obama for the Democrats and John and Rudy for the Republicans. The conventions were already scheduled. The Democrats would meet August 25 through August 28th in a new location, Colorado Springs (instead of Denver) and the Republicans September 1 through September 4 in Minneapolis. Go Obama!!! It was expected that there would be write-ins for Ron Paul, but not enough to change the outcome of the election.

Clinton-Obama or Obama-Clinton, even money. In as much as I was a McCain fan, I hoped he get the nomination and Rudy the Vice-Presidential nod. I didn't have any problem electing a Mormon to the Presidency, but Glenn Beck wasn't running.

When TV came back on, the first ad I saw was for Lipitor with Dr. Robert Jarvik, the inventor of the artificial heart. Bullcrap! What came to be known as the Jarvik-7 was in fact the final product of the collaboration of many researchers who came before him, and their contributions to this project. Paul Winchell, ventriloquist and much-loved voice and television series character actor, invented the original artificial heart. With the help and advice of Dr. Henry Heimlich, Winchell designed an artificial heart and built a prototype. He filed for a patent in 1956, which he received in 1963. Winchell donated his pa-

tent to the institution and Jarvik, using many of Winchell's basic principles, took the device further, culminating with the Jarvik-7. (It can't be one of my survival stories unless I give you at least 100 pieces of ~~useful~~ useless information with links to back most of them.)

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It was 'nervous time'. When we went to Barstow, most thought it was a good idea. When the article came out in the paper, I had a visitor, Chris. Long story short, he brought the weapons and ammunition he had and I stored it in the shelter. We had just enough money to buy the TS-2000 (without the circuit board) and I got the MFJ-1798 because it was the most antenna for the money and could be mounted on steel mast sections. We extended it the full 65' requiring it to be guyed. Dick gave me back the Comet and I mounted it on the shed on a 10' mast section. The next time money showed up in quantity, I got the Diamond D-130J Discone (~\$100 plus shipping) to connect to one of the Bearcat scanners. I really wanted a better scanner but, like most things, it would have to wait.

On the 5th of September, the contest was clear, McCain vs. Obama. That CAIR organization went all out for Osama Obama, resulting in McCain losing by a narrow margin. I rather suspect that those bombings might something to do with a Muslim not becoming President. Yeah, yeah, I know, United Church of Christ – you can take the man out of Islam, but you can't take Islam out of the man. Of course I could be wrong, what would be new about that? I'm the guy who used pre-head spaced barrels in a M2HB. I had never actually even seen a M2HB until we went to Barstow, except in pictures and I hadn't downloaded the FM back then.

When the long distance was restored, I talked to both my boys and told them we were fine and ready for the next round. Damon wanted me to explain and Derek asked, "What do you think will happen if Thompson wins?" I told him what I thought and offered to send him a copy of a video. He declined, saying we'd already been through that. Because I assumed the feds monitored all long distance calls looking for certain key words like 'machine guns', 'grenades' and 'Barstow' I didn't tell him about our little trip.

Every chance I got, I stocked up or insisted that my dear wife buy 'more'. I managed to rebuild our supply of prescription drugs or find substitutes. My gimmick of buying 6 cartons of Kools and only smoking 5 was known but I pretended not to remember and insisted she buy 6 cartons every month. I also insisted on an allowance for things that might come up. She agreed to \$10 a week, the same as many kids got. Periodically, Ron would stop buy with a couple of cartons and collect my allowances. It wasn't long before I had half a shelf in my storage cabinet of smokes buried behind the grenades. She wouldn't touch them.

The Hard Way – Chapter 5

Meanwhile, Washington, New York, Chicago, Denver, Dallas and LA had started the cleanups. It was estimated it would take several years before the cities could be reoccupied. Even with the Prevacid, my stomach was giving me fits. I had enough stored up to be able to take it twice a day and heal that puppy, again. Once healed, I'd go back to once a day. That and Maalox should see it healed in maybe a month.

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On November 4, 2008, John lost by a wide margin. The Republicans had very narrow majority in the House and Senate. Before he was sworn in, Obama announced a reduction in force (RIF) in both Iraq and Afghanistan with a goal of having all of our troops home by mid-year. I liked Fred's line in that movie (*Last Best Chance*), "We can't let these bastards start WW III."

Bombing 6 cities hadn't caused WW III because Dubya was on top of it and talked to Putin on the hot line. We were still at Orange, down from Red. The military, according to Derek, was at DEFCON 3 and considering reducing to DEFCON 4 as soon as the troops got home. Most of the time we were at DEFCON 4 because we had troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. I think the small number of troops in Afghanistan could be removed in a week to 10 days. Iraq would be a problem because of the ~160,000 troops we now had there. We would take some time to transport the matériel home, fighting insurgents the entire time.

With an evenly divided Congress, one couldn't expect much change out of that body. Not with that Kennedy, Schumer, et al. clique in the Senate and the new moderate Republican Speaker of the House. There was nominal support for staying in Iraq and Afghanistan, but most voiced support for President's plan to bring the troops home.

Immigration reform was still stalled after 3 years of serious debate. Many of us here in the tract agreed that bringing the troops home was good, but the border had to be sealed or we'd all have to learn Spanish (I mentioned my plan – force all of them to return home and apply for re-admittance. That would give us time to build a great big wall, plant mines, dig trenches filled with snakes, the usual stuff).

I doubt that any right thinking person could disagree that something had to be done about our porous borders. Somehow, terrorists had managed to get 6 nukes into the country. I don't know about Canada, but that joke in the movie about wrapping them in bundles of marijuana sure struck home. So did the fact that people were importing automatic weapons and explosives from El Salvador. Let me remind you:

In the early 1980s, a violent civil war began in El Salvador, which would last more than 12 years. Approximately 100,000 people were killed in the war, and more than one million people fled from El Salvador to the US. The Salvadorian refugees and immigrants initially settled primarily in southern California and Washington, DC. Some of the refu-

gees and immigrants had ties with La Mara, a violent street gang from El Salvador. Others had been members of paramilitary groups like the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMNL) during the civil war. FMNL was made up of Salvadorian peasants who were trained as guerilla fighters. Many were adept at using explosives, firearms, and booby traps.

Most of the Salvadorian refugees settled in the established Hispanic neighborhoods of the "Rampart" area of Los Angeles. However, Salvadorians were not readily accepted into the Los Angeles Hispanic community, and were frequently targeted by local Hispanic gangs. As a result, in the late 1980s, some refugees and refugee members of La Mara and FMNL formed what is now known as the Mara Salvatrucha (MS) street gang in Los Angeles. Like many other street gangs, MS initially formed for protection, but quickly developed a reputation for being organized and extremely violent. MS membership continued to be fed by refugees from groups like FMNL.

Since its inception in California and Washington, DC, Mara Salvatrucha had expanded into Oregon, Alaska, Texas, Nevada, Utah, Oklahoma, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Maryland, Virginia, Georgia, Florida, Canada, and Mexico. MS was unique in that, unlike traditional US street gangs, it maintained active ties with MS members and factions in El Salvador. Mara Salvatrucha is truly an international gang.

Mara Salvatrucha gang members' maintained contact between groups in the United States and El Salvador for several specific reasons. In El Salvador, a hand grenade sells for \$1-\$2 USD and an M16 rifle will sell for approximately \$200-\$220 USD. This communication and alliance provided a mechanism for MS gang members to access military-style munitions and also established a network to traffic illegal firearms into the United States.

Although military weapons seemed to be readily available to this gang, street intelligence indicates they often had difficulty obtaining handguns, which were not readily available in El Salvador. This created a demand for small arms by MS members in the US and El Salvador. This demand was so high that MS members will often take handguns as payment for drug transactions. The guns were then sent back to El Salvador, or used in the United States.

MS was also involved in exporting stolen US cars to South America. The cars were often traded for drugs when dealing with cartels. It is estimated that 80% of the cars driven in El Salvador were stolen in the United States. Car theft was a lucrative business for MS.

The Mara Salvatrucha gang was involved in a variety of criminal enterprises. As with members of other gangs, MS members seemed willing to commit almost any crime, but MS gang members tend to have a higher level of criminal involvement than other gang members. MS members had been involved in burglaries, auto thefts, narcotic sales, home invasion robberies, weapons smuggling, carjacking, extortion, murder, rape, witness intimidation, illegal firearm sales, car theft and aggravated assaults. In terms of

drug trafficking activities, common drugs sold by MS members included cocaine, marijuana, heroin, and methamphetamine. Mara Salvatrucha gang members had even placed a "tax" on prostitutes and non-gang member drug dealers who were working in MS "turf." Failure to pay up would most likely result in violence.

Originally, only Salvadorians could become members of Mara Salvatrucha. However, MS now included members from Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico. Mara Salvatrucha also had a few African-American members. MS had broken the race barrier for membership, but most new members were still selected because of their ethnic (Central American) background. The majority of MS gang members were between the ages of 11 and 40 years old.

Mara Salvatrucha members identify themselves with tattoos such as the number "13," or trece in Spanish. MS gang members would also use the Spanish word sureno, meaning "southerner" to identify themselves. Sometimes sureno was abbreviated to SUR. These terms make reference to the fact that MS gang members like to claim they were from southern California as opposed to northern California, and were rivals with northern California gangs. Often, this rivalry was taken outside the state of California.

Additionally, Mara Salvatrucha gang members had several ongoing rivalries with large southern California gangs, including the 18th Street gang, and in California, commonly attacked 18th Street gang members on sight. There were many Hispanic gangs, including MS, which used the number "13," and the terms sureno and SUR as identifiers, including street/prison gangs outside of California. Thus, it was important to identify specific tattoos used by the Mara Salvatrucha gang, which include "M" or "MS", in addition to the 13 or SUR identification. Another common tattoo seen was "Salvadorian Pride". There is also a good chance that the member will also have the name of his particular clique tattooed on his/her body. Other tattoos encountered with MS members had included pentagrams and other occult symbols. These could be confusing when found in conjunction with gang tattoos and could cause misconceptions of Satanic involvement by the gang. The most common hand sign used by MS members is the letter M formed by using three fingers and pointing the hand downward. This hand sign can resemble the pitchfork sign used by Folk/People Nation gangs from the Midwest, and could be made with the fingers pointing up or down. The symbols used as tattoos were also used in graffiti and personal writings.

In general, Mara Salvatrucha members show no fear of law enforcement. They are not easily intimidated and frequently act defiantly. Mara Salvatrucha gang members had been responsible for the execution of three federal agents and numerous shootings of law enforcement officers across the country. MS gang members had been known to booby-trap their drug stash houses using antipersonnel grenades on the assumption that these structures would be searched by law enforcement. MS members at one time often bragged of assaulting law enforcement officers as a means of showing their loyalty and commitment to the gang. However, these claims had never been confirmed. Today, assaults on law enforcement officers were not required for membership, but were

always an option. Thus, officers dealing with MS members (or any street gang members, for that matter) should always use extreme caution.

Law enforcement and the courts had used two primary methods to deal with criminal activity by MS: arrest/incarceration and deportation. Between April 1994 and August 1995, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) arrested and deported more than 100 MS gang members to El Salvador. Many Mara Salvatrucha gang members were currently in the United States illegally and were concerned about deportation. If a gang member was deported to El Salvador, there was a chance they would be targeted by the Sombra Negra (Black Shadow) death squad. Sombra Negra and similar groups were legendary in Central America. Gangsters and citizens alike believed that the Sombra Negra was made up of rogue cops and military personnel who targeted unwanted criminals and gang members for vigilante "justice". While the governments of Central American countries officially denied the presence of these death squads, many MS members in the US believed these groups exist, and fear that they would be targeted after being deported. Honduran MS gang members had the same fear. Sombra Negra had claimed responsibility for the deaths of several MS gang members in El Salvador. The existence or belief in the existence of these death squads could also be a chief motivation for hardcore MS gang members to come to the United States.

On July 23, 2003 Brenda Paz, a pregnant 17-year old girl, was found murdered on the banks of the Shenandoah River in Virginia. Police believed she was killed to prevent her from cooperating in MS-13 related investigations in six states. Four of her friends were later convicted of the murder.

On December 23, 2004 one of worst MS-13 crimes in Central America happened in Chamelecon, Honduras. An intercity bus was intercepted and sprayed with automatic gunfire, killing some 28 passengers. Those convicted were MS gang leaders and in February 2007 the courts found Juan Carlos Miralda Bueso and Darwin Alexis Ramírez guilty of several crimes including murder and attempted murder. Ebert Anibal Rivera was held over the attack and was arrested in Texas after having fled to the US. While another gang member, also accused of masterminding the attack, Juan Bautista Jimenez, was killed in prison. According to the authorities he was hanged by fellow MS-13 inmates.

On May 13, 2006, Ernesto "Smokey" Miranda was murdered at his home in El Salvador, a few hours after declining to attend a party for a gang member who had just been released from prison. He had begun studying law and working to keep kids out of gangs.

According to the Washington Times, MS 13 "is thought to have established a major smuggling center" in Mexico. There are reports that MS 13 members have been sent to Arizona to target border guards and Minuteman Project volunteers. There have been several reports that Al-Qaeda has contacted MS 13 about human smuggling. However another report states that an alliance between MS 13 and Al-Qaeda is improbable.

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We obviously don't have any problems since the terrorists already detonated their six nukes. If you believe that, I'll buy you some swamp land in Florida and explain how you can get rich without getting eaten by a gator.

The same Deputy that Lance had talked to earlier, a Sergeant, explained that most of the local activity had been local gangs who found a place to shelter, then came out to start looting. They all denied participating in the looting of the gun stores, but that was to be expected, he claimed. I can't tell you the names of our local gangs, but the largest group was Hispanic. Several names were mentioned including: West Side Lancas, Crazy Mexican Familia, WS Val Verde Parque 13 Smoke Town, Tiny Locos, Malditos, Palmas13 Deadly Minds, Creators, Youngsters and Kings. I think I taught in most of those schools when I was a substitute teacher.

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Here's one woman who is telling it like it is...in her opinion!

Written by a housewife from New Jersey and sounds like it! This is one teed off lady.

"Are we fighting a war on terror or aren't we? Was it or was it not started by Islamic people who brought it to our shores on September 11, 2001? Were people from all over the world, mostly Americans, not brutally murdered that day, in downtown Manhattan, across the Potomac from our nation's capital and in a field in Pennsylvania? Did nearly three-thousand men, women and children die a horrible, burning or crushing death that day, or didn't they?

And I'm supposed to care that a copy of the Koran was "desecrated" When an over-worked American soldier kicked it or got it wet?...Well, I don't. I don't care at all.

I'll start caring when Osama bin Laden turns himself in and repents for incinerating all those innocent people on 9/11.

I'll care about the Koran when the fanatics in the Middle East start caring about the Holy Bible, the mere possession of which is a crime in Saudi Arabia.

I'll care when these thugs tell the world they are sorry for hacking off Nick Berg's head while Berg screamed through his gurgling slashed throat.

I'll care when the cowardly so-called "insurgents" in Iraq come out and fight like men instead of disrespecting their own religion by hiding in mosques.

I'll care when the mindless zealots who blow themselves up in search of nirvana care about the innocent children within range of their suicide bombs.

I'll care when the American media stops pretending that their First Amendment liberties

are somehow derived from International law instead of the United States Constitution's Bill of Rights.

In the meantime, when I hear a story about a brave marine roughing up an Iraqi terrorist to obtain information, know this: I don't care.

When I see a fuzzy photo of a pile of naked Iraqi prisoners who have been humiliated in what amounts to a college-hazing incident, rest assured: I don't care.

When I see a wounded terrorist get shot in the head when he is told not to move because he might be booby-trapped, you can take it to the bank: I don't care.

When I hear that a prisoner, who was issued a Koran and a prayer mat, and fed "special" food that is paid for by my tax dollars, is complaining that his holy book is being "mishandled," you can absolutely believe in your heart of hearts: I don't care.

And oh, by the way, I've noticed that sometimes it's spelled "Koran" and other times "Quran." Well, Jimmy Crack Corn and - you guessed it - I don't care !!!!!

If you agree with this viewpoint, pass this on to all your e-mail friends. Sooner or later, it'll get to the people responsible for this ridiculous behavior!

If you don't agree, then by all means hit the delete button. Should you choose the latter, then please don't complain when more atrocities committed by radical Muslims happen here in our great country! And may I add:

"Some people spend an entire lifetime wondering if they made a difference in the world. But, the Marines don't have that problem." – Ronald Reagan

I have another quote that I would like to add AND.....I hope you forward all this.

"If we ever forget that we're One Nation under God, then we will be a nation gone under." also by... Ronald Reagan

One last thought for the day:

In case we find ourselves starting to believe all the anti-American sentiment and negativity, we should remember England's Prime Minister Tony Blair's words during a recent interview. When asked by one of his Parliament members why he believes so much in America, he said:

"A simple way to take measure of a country is to look at how many want in... And how many want out."

I'd vote for him. There are probably several copies of that on my computer, it seems to

resurface from time to time. In the aftermath of the most recent terrorist attacks, it bears repeating.

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Let me remind you:

DEFCON 5 Normal peacetime readiness;

DEFCON 4 Normal, increased intelligence and strengthened security measures;

DEFCON 3 Increase in force readiness above normal readiness;

DEFCON 2 Further Increase in force readiness, but less than maximum readiness; and,

DEFCON 1 Maximum force readiness (missile primed, bombers airborne, SSBNs ready to launch)

We were more vulnerable than any time in my lifetime. We had 6 destroyed cities, we still had troops overseas getting killed, we had a new, no nonsense President starting January 20, 2009. Frankly, I was happy we'd gone to Barstow, the Corps had ordered several thousand HK416s to replace the missing arms.

Fair Use Applies:

What follows is an HKPRO Exclusive, a narrative on the development of the HK416 by Larry Vickers, one of the foremost experts on special operations, and their related small arms.

Larry has been a good friend to HKPRO.COM, and it is with great pleasure that we provide you with this inside look at one of the most significant advances to the M16 system since its inception. Advancement that Larry Vickers was an integral part of. Also, though he is modest about it, when he refers to "The Unit" below, he is referring to the US Army's Elite Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta.

The project started in the year 2001 when I was the weapons R&D NCO at my former unit. Jim Schatz was visiting on an unrelated matter when the topic came up of improving the military M4 carbine. I was well aware of H&K's success in fixing the problems of the British SA 80 and was very interested in what H&K had in mind in terms of an upgrade to the M4 carbine. I have very extensive experience with the M4 even by Spec Ops standards both in using the M4 and training others to use it. I knew that the M4 as issued was having problems in SOCOM wide use, much of which is because the carbine was being used way outside its design parameters. If you keep the M4 lubricated, use only milspec ball ammo (M855 & M193), use magazines in good condition, and fire it on semi auto it works very well. But as soon as you try to push it outside those limits such as extreme firing conditions and extensive full auto fire, as well as running it with little or no lube you will have problems. In addition trying to issue versions with shorter than 14.5 inch barrels and suppressed fire are also big problem areas with the as issued M4. The design is a carbine modification of the 20 inch barreled AR15/M16 weapon system. The M4 is pushing that design as far as it can go and still have an accepta-

ble degree of service life and reliability. Any requirements beyond that design envelope will require a redesign or a new weapon.

My former Unit had been searching for an M4 style carbine that was smaller and more maneuverable in confined spaces. This has been an ongoing effort to some degree ever since we had gone from MP5's to M4's. A lot of money had been spent on testing every short barreled AR style weapon we could find. At the end of the day we came to the conclusion that none of them answered our needs.

They may be fine for casual use but they were not suitable for the demands we place on a weapon of that type. In all honesty, none of them was even close. At that time we began our search to other non-AR style weapons such as the G36C and the SIG SG552. Shortly after these other efforts began we became aware of the H&K offer of a product improvement program for the M4 carbine. H&K had offered this to other key organizations in the US Military small arms community with no takers. HK was looking for loaner US Government property M4 carbines to analyze and begin an improvement process on, much like the SA80 program had preceded. The program would be of no cost to the Government with the understanding at the end of the program the Government had no obligation to purchase any product H&K brought to the market.

Bottom-line if we did not like what they produced we could just walk away. To me this was a no-brainer. I presented the proposal to the Unit chain of command and after a legal review it was decided to provide H&K with the carbines they needed to begin the program. It was also understood that the Unit could pull out of the program at any time. As far as the Unit was concerned there was no downside to this arrangement. It is somewhat surprising why no other organization before the Unit took H&K up on their very generous offer; however if you know the inner workings of the military small arms establishment and industry it is par for the course.

The modifications began with high speed video of the M4 carbine functioning. After carefully analyzing the firing cycle of the weapon a series of modifications were put into motion to address the various issues of the weapon. A key component was already done in the magazine that was taken from the SA80 program. (A little known fact is Ken Hackathorn and I brought the first SA80 magazines into the US in the year 2000 after a visit to H&K Oberndorf (HKO) regarding the ill-fated HK1911 program. I then placed an order for 200 magazines for test and evaluation at my Unit. That started a sequence of events that eventually led to the adoption of the H&K M16/SA80 magazine for all of SOCOM.)

The main effort from the start was to adapt the unique H&K gas tappet system used in the G36 to the M4 carbine. This was the crux of the effort from the very beginning. The engineers at HKO had the highest regard for several design features of the AR15/M16/M4 weapons system and they vowed from the start to retain as many of the good features the weapon already had and only address the characteristics that required attention.

Frankly, the M16 magazine design has inherent design flaws and a much better magazine could be utilized. The one major drawback to that is that it would make the magazine non-interchangeable with other M16 style weapons and magazines on the market. Unfortunately that took a different magazine off the table for this project. That left the gas system as the main effort.

The HKO engineers held the belief, as do I and many other knowledgeable firearms industry people, that the gas direct system of the AR family is less than optimum in many ways for a military service weapon. Frankly, the weapon has been a success in spite of this fact, not because of it. It was felt that the G36 gas system would be a perfect fit if it could be made to work within the M4 envelope. It answers the mail across the board as a gas operating system goes and in hindsight it is the gas system the AR should have had from the start. Essentially a product improved AR180/G43/SVT40 style gas tappet systems; it offers key proprietary features that no other gas tappet system has. In my opinion it is the best gas system currently on the market for a shoulder fired non-sustained fire weapon. HKO is justifiably proud of this and uses it whenever feasible. It is used in the G36, XM8, HK416 and HK417 rifles with it being one of the key attributes of those weapons.

At first simple modifications were performed using many of the original M4 components such as bolt and extractor. One thing that became apparent immediately was the extended service life of both of these critical components. That is when we discovered the hidden killer in the AR style gas direct system: heat. Heat from the gases funneled into the bolt carrier not only dry out lubricant and deposit carbon fouling, as anyone who has any time behind an AR style weapon knows, but also dramatically shortens service life of key components in the operating mechanism.

With the H&K G36 style gas system, the operating parts stay dramatically cooler and thus prolong service life immeasurably. For instance, I have no idea how long an HK416 bolt and/or extractor will last because I have yet to see one break. I have seen HK416 style weapons with over 26,000 rounds fired through them with no parts breakages of any kind and plenty of serviceable barrel life. As I have demonstrated many times, the lack of heat transfer through the pusher rod of the gas tappet system and into the operating group is so dramatic that you can easily touch the pusher rod return spring and handle the bolt carrier in your bare hands after several magazines of full auto fire. The distinct advantages of this gas system over the original gas direct system are very impressive and have to be seen to be fully appreciated.

After the gas system was finalized and H&K was fabricating all the key internal bolt carrier components, engineers at HKO turned their attention to the removable free float rail system. The Unit had a requirement that the rail system would allow access to the gas system for maintenance and return to zero for any rail mounted devices such as IR lasers. This was a very tall order to say the least. Frankly, I had serious doubts it could be done. What HKO brought to the table next is what really proved to the Unit and everyone involved that they truly are in a league of their own when it comes to engineering expertise.

The resulting HK416 is a simple yet truly ingenious design that does exactly what it was asked to do. It has several proprietary features and is an example of superb engineering and manufacturing excellence on many levels. That was all the Unit needed to see and after a very successful 15,000 round endurance test of one of the first production HK416 10 inch carbines, they placed the first order for several hundred HK416 complete 10 inch barreled weapons. Those particular carbines have been in continuous combat since when they left the factory in Oberndorf as this is written in June of 2006. No assault rifle in modern history has gone from development, testing, production, and sustained combat operations more quickly than the HK416. The Unit commander who was in place when the weapons were delivered said it was the most successful program the Unit had ever undertaken with a vendor. Needless to say I am very proud of the fact that I started the project back in 2001 and it has been a success; so much so that a follow on project with the HK417 is well on its way to being a sequel to the HK416 story. I can't discuss that at this time but will give HKPRO an insider story when I can.

After fielding the HK416 only a few things were found to be in need of attention. One was that the heavy profile barrel under the handguards makes the weapon very heavy when accessories are attached. This was a by-product of the original M4 feedback and the projected high rate of fire the HK416 would have to endure within certain sectors of SOCOM that did a lot of full-auto fire. A lighter barrel profile that reduces the weight of the barrel by 7 ounces is available to answer that concern. Also some users were seeing slam fires when using non mil spec 5.56 mm/.223 ammo such as certain types of frangible. This is due to the higher closing energy of the bolt carrier due in part to the lack of gas rings and the heavier buffer and stronger spring. To address this, HKO designed a firing pin safety similar to the one used in the HK UMP 45 ACP SMG. This type safety is also being used in the HK417. In addition enhanced surface finishes are being researched as well as the ongoing refinement that occurs with all H&K weapons.

In my estimation, the HK416 has $\frac{1}{10}$ th the carbon fouling in the receiver and bolt/bolt carrier as compared to a gas direct AR style weapon. This is equivalent to firing 1000 rounds through an HK416 being roughly the same as shooting 100 rounds through a conventional AR15/M16/M4 platform. If a sound suppressor is used, this ratio increases to approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ the amount of carbon fouling as a gas direct weapon.

As this is being written I have learned that all the US Military's top special operations units in JSOC will be fielding the HK416 as their primary carbine. All the key Units in JSOC chose the HK416 in preference to the current M4 and the FN SCAR Light which is still in development for the rest of SOCOM. It is very satisfying to me that units that could field any carbine they want choose the HK416. This tells me we have done our job, and have done it well.

For the record, I have been one of the most vocal individuals inside H&K pushing to have a civilian HK416 released to the gun buying public. Unfortunately, the decision is way above my pay grade. At this writing I have no idea if it will ever be available for the

civilian market. I can promise you that I will keep pushing for it as long as I am associated with H&K.

The Hard Way – Chapter 6

From the new HK416 came the (even better) HK417 in 7.62x51mm. Did he say sound suppressor? He's wrong, the weapons still makes sound, but the flash is eliminated, thus making it a greatly improved flashhider. We didn't go to Fountain Valley because the military wouldn't let anyone not associated with the cleanup into greater LA. Then, I remember Charles City and the lesson I learned there.

We secured chainsaws and headed to Fountain Valley to help with the cleanup of downed trees. We figured on 6 dozen LED flashlights/gun-lights and an equal number of 5.56 and 7.62 improved quick attach flashhidiers. For a while, it appeared that wasn't going to work, the second shift came on. They weren't running a third shift and our chance finally came. A shot of pepper spray, a pair of handcuffs and we were in. We got all of the units and extra adapters, just in case. This wasn't looting, I think the correct term would either be armed robbery or burglary. Or maybe it was: strategic relocation.

Rather than go north, we went south, then east, then north and finally west. If you decide to look, Lake Elsinore was on the way home but we didn't find tricky Dickie's place. We did stop and eat at In and Out, we were tired, hungry and way past our bedtimes. We also had all three pickups filled with sawn firewood to support our cover.

By this time, the only thing we didn't have that I wanted, just for fun and giggles, was – you guessed it, a .50 caliber rifle. Some of the ammo we picked up at Barstow was Mk 211 (an accident, we thought it was belted .50BMG) and all I really need was the rifle, scope and a shoulder pad. Ron said they had to go check on Robert and Johnny, if I wanted, he could see about asking Robert to buy one.

At a loss how to pay for it, I called Matt and spun a tale. Sharon need cataract surgery, our old Daewoo need a transmission job and because of the higher gas prices, I couldn't afford my prescriptions. He said he thought he could get it by the trust committee, just keep an eye on our Iowa checking account. Actually, Sharon already had the surgery when we refi'd the house, we'd traded in the Daewoo on the Rondo, it was early in the year and Humana was still paying most of the cost of my drugs. I gave Ron a check for ten grand and told him to get what he could, used was ok if the barrel was good. It seems that guns sell for less in New Mexico, I didn't know that.

Someone (probably Chris) raised the question of why we would risk going to Fountain Valley. I could say because I'm writing this and he isn't, but that not the real reason. First, Lance agreed with me that this was far from over. Until we could get our borders secure, we had that problem. Second, he had concerns about Russia and China (about time). If both Russia and China were friendly, why were they completing such a massive defense buildup? Third, while Iran hadn't test a nuclear weapon, yet, that crackpot announced they were close and when they got one, they'd test it regardless of what the G-8 or UN said.

"There it is, Gar-Bear. Why you'd want a rifle that weighs 35 pounds with a scope plus the weight of loaded 5 round magazine is beyond me. I have your change, \$133.76. I should keep it just to pay me for the grief I had getting it past the California border."

"You have California plates, right? They typically ask, 'any fruit' and tell you to move on. Why didn't you get me a Barrett? I've never heard of a Tac-50?"

"They did, but I must have had a guilty look on my face, he almost asked us to pull over so he could look in the trunk. The reason I got the Tac-50 was simple economics. A complete package cost less than a Barrett rifle. I upgraded the scope, but you'll have to get your own suppressor. Elite Iron makes one and you can shop the web for others. One thing... the spare 5 round magazines are very expensive."

"Did he search your car?"

"No."

"Then, what are you worried about?"

"How are you going to carry the rifle, it's heavy? By the way, I bought a scope for my M14."

"Did you sight it in?"

"Yeah, why?"

"Snipers usually work in pairs with the sniper and an observer. Want to be my observer? That M14 with a scope would make a good backup rifle."

"How much of the .50 caliber ammo do you have?"

"24 cans of 120 rounds each, 2,880 rounds."

"How much do they weigh?"

"About 38-39 pounds per can."

"Don't look at me to carry an extra can of reloads for you."

"I won't, you can carry the 8 spare loaded magazines."

o

It came when Taiwan declared its independence. China obviously didn't like that and began a rocket assault from the mainland while it's Navy moved into place. Obama hadn't been in office long enough to find out where his bedroom was, but the Chairman

of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral Mullen, had issued orders to the fleet the moment the problem came up. We had 3 CSGs forward deployed to WestPac, based on the CIA accidentally doing something right for a change.

The 3 CSGs were ordered to Taiwan and the USS George Washington, CVN-73, sortied out of Yokosuka. The closest and first to arrive was the Reagan followed within hours by the Nimitz and Lincoln. The Stennis was steaming at maximum speed for the group but was at least 30 hours out. The Chinese had 2 carriers to our 3 and later 4; however, they had the position advantage.

They also had missiles positioned along the coast that we didn't know about that could reach some of our ships. When an Arleigh Burke class destroyer was sunk by torpedoes, the battle was joined. Our carriers launched the F/A-18 Hornets and Super Hornets and took out one of their carriers. Other flights continued to the mainland and used cluster munitions against the missile installations. Next a Chinese sub launched a nuclear torpedo against the Washington taking out 7 vessels.

A Los Angeles 688I class sub sank the second Chinese carrier and two more vessels. A second 688I sunk 2 destroyers and one smaller vessel, probably a frigate. The SSGNs Ohio and Florida launched the 154 cruise missiles including 7 TLAM-Ns from each boat.

China responded by launching 18 of the cancelled D-41s, each with 7 450kt warheads, and 55 of the D-31A, each with 3 150kt warheads. Their second wave consisted of the 20 operational DF-5A liquid fueled missiles with 5mT warheads. Both of their missile boats launched 12 missiles, one carrying JL-2 missiles, each with 3 90kt warheads. The other carried the older JL-1 missiles, each with one ~250kt warhead. These missiles got through.

The US response was sure and swift. We launched all 450 MM III missiles and the D5s from 2 boats. Some of our MM III missiles had been upgraded to the Peacekeeper warheads and others still had the 3 335kt MIRVs. It would seem that the decision was made to launch or lose the Minuteman Missiles. Don't kid yourselves, there is no such thing as a proportional response.

We have 14 SSBNs, some are in port and some on station, say 50-50. That left our country with 5 loaded SSBNs in position, each with 24 missiles carrying 8 warheads, a total of 960 very accurate warheads. In port boats were making ready to sail when the balloon went up and they left with available personnel, adding ~1,344 additional warheads to our available supply.

o

I knew it the minute that Fox News reported the attack on Taiwan. I didn't know when, but I sure knew what ('if' died 40 stories back). I dumped my robe for my Marpat and boots, then went door to door and told them they'd better plan on heading to the shelter soon. I called Ron and told him it was a RED ALERT because China attacked Taiwan.

He said he knew and they were getting it together to come over. I called the boys and told them what I knew (nothing, I know nothing) and told them to duck and cover. I scurried about emptying food from the refrigerators and moving it to the shelter. Sharon called Amy and told her to get home, then Lorrie and David.

I'll tell you, it sure was a strange way to celebrate Wednesday, April 1st, 2009. The tall tales aren't supposed to be real. Is the joke on us? If I'd have had time, I'm sure I would have felt bad for Obama. Sorry Obama, I barely have time to feel bad for us. The gas tank was full, our food was full and at least I had a radio. There didn't seem to be much point to emptying the storage cabinet, but I did because I had the time.

Most everyone was sitting in our kitchen, living room or office by the time the Director of DHS made the announcement of the Air Defense Emergency. We had barely heard the emergency announcement when the lights went out.

"What the hell..."

"EMP," Lance said.

"I knew there was a reason I cut the power to the shelter. I'll get a flashlight and we'll fire up the generator so everyone can see. I suppose our TV is fried and all of our printers, the computers and everything electronic. Darn... I'm going to miss my computer."

o

The next Pearl Harbor will not announce itself with a searing flash of nuclear light or with the plaintive wails of those dying of Ebola or its genetically engineered twin. You will hear a sharp crack in the distance. By the time you mistakenly identify this sound as an innocent clap of thunder, the civilized world will have become unhinged. Fluorescent lights and television sets will glow eerily bright, despite being turned off. The aroma of ozone mixed with smoldering plastic will seep from outlet covers as electric wires arc and telephone lines melt. Your Palm Pilot and MP3 player will feel warm to the touch, their batteries overloaded. Your computer, and every bit of data on it, will be toast. And then you will notice that the world sounds different too. The background music of civilization, the whirl of internal-combustion engines, will have stopped. Save a few diesels, engines may never start again. You, however, will remain unharmed, as you find yourself thrust backward 200 years, to a time when electricity meant a lightning bolt fracturing the night sky. This is not a hypothetical, son-of-Y2K scenario. It is a realistic assessment of the damage the Pentagon believes could be inflicted by a new generation of weapons... E-bombs.

The first major test of an American electromagnetic bomb is scheduled for next year. Ultimately, the Army hopes to use E-bomb technology to explode artillery shells in mid-flight. The Navy wants to use the E-bomb's high-power microwave pulses to neutralize anti-ship missiles. And, the Air Force plans to equip its bombers, strike fighters, cruise missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles with E-bomb capabilities. When fielded, these

will be among the most technologically sophisticated weapons the US military establishment has ever built.

There is, however, another part to the E-bomb story, one that military planners are reluctant to discuss. While American versions of these weapons are based on advanced technologies, terrorists could use a less expensive, low-tech approach to create the same destructive power. "Any nation with even a 1940s technology base could make them," says Carlo Kopp, an Australian-based expert on high-tech warfare. "The threat of E-bomb proliferation is very real." Popular Mechanics estimates a basic weapon could be built for \$400.

The theory behind the E-bomb was proposed in 1925 by physicist Arthur H. Compton – not to build weapons, but to study atoms. Compton demonstrated that firing a stream of highly energetic photons into atoms that have a low atomic number causes them to eject a stream of electrons. Physics students know this phenomenon as the Compton Effect. It became a key tool in unlocking the secrets of the atom.

Ironically, this nuclear research led to an unexpected demonstration of the power of the Compton Effect, and spawned a new type of weapon. In 1958, nuclear weapons designers ignited hydrogen bombs high over the Pacific Ocean. The detonations created bursts of gamma rays that, upon striking the oxygen and nitrogen in the atmosphere, released a tsunami of electrons that spread for hundreds of miles. Street lights were blown out in Hawaii and radio navigation was disrupted for 18 hours, as far away as Australia. The United States set out to learn how to "harden" electronics against this electromagnetic pulse (EMP) and develop EMP weapons.

America has remained at the forefront of EMP weapons development. Although much of this work is classified, it's believed that current efforts are based on using high-temperature superconductors to create intense magnetic fields. What worries terrorism experts is an idea the United States studied but discarded – the Flux Compression Generator (FCG).

An FCG is an astoundingly simple weapon. It consists of an explosives-packed tube placed inside a slightly larger copper coil. The instant before the chemical explosive is detonated, the coil is energized by a bank of capacitors, creating a magnetic field. The explosive charge detonates from the rear forward. As the tube flares outward it touches the edge of the coil, thereby creating a moving short circuit. "The propagating short has the effect of compressing the magnetic field while reducing the inductance of the stator [coil]," says Kopp. "The result is that FCGs will produce a ramping current pulse, which breaks before the final disintegration of the device. Published results suggest ramp times of tens of hundreds of microseconds and peak currents of tens of millions of amps." The pulse that emerges makes a lightning bolt seem like a flashbulb by comparison.

An Air Force spokesman, who describes this effect as similar to a lightning strike, points out that electronics systems can be protected by placing them in metal enclosures

called Faraday Cages that divert any impinging electromagnetic energy directly to the ground. Foreign military analysts say this reassuring explanation is incomplete.

The Indian military has studied FCG devices in detail because it fears that Pakistan, with which it has ongoing conflicts, might use E-bombs against the city of Bangalore, a sort of Indian Silicon Valley. An Indian Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis study of E-bombs points to two problems that have been largely overlooked by the West. The first is that very-high-frequency pulses, in the microwave range, can worm their way around vents in Faraday Cages. The second concern is known as the "late-time EMP effect," and may be the most worrisome aspect of FCG devices. It occurs in the 15 minutes after detonation. During this period, the EMP that surged through electrical systems creates localized magnetic fields. When these magnetic fields collapse, they cause electric surges to travel through the power and telecommunication infrastructure. This string-of-firecrackers effect means that terrorists would not have to drop their homemade E-bombs directly on the targets they wish to destroy. Heavily guarded sites, such as telephone switching centers and electronic funds-transfer exchanges, could be attacked through their electric and telecommunication connections.

Knock out electric power, computers and telecommunication and you've destroyed the foundation of modern society. In the age of Third World-sponsored terrorism, the E-bomb is the great equalizer.

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Loose ends (that's the next story)? Nope, nobody was back to work yet, except for Dick and he was working a job in Lancaster. He pulled in before we all made it to the shelter. It would be several days before we started to get news from the ham net about which places had been hit. The problem with the world was the excess of nuclear weapons. Russia had the most and we had the best. China was out of them and Israel denied having any. The Pakis and Indians would someday wipe each other out and the Russians might rule the world because the UK and France only had about 600 between them.

The US had limited resources in its ABM defense, 11 interceptors plus the interceptors on the fleet. The best time to stop a missile is in the launch phase, second best is mid-flight and the last chance is in the reentry phase. Fully one-third were intercepted on takeoff from the first wave. Nine more were intercepted by our ABM shield, allowing the remaining to get through. None of the second wave of land based missiles avoided lift phase interception. That did yeoman's work on their land based missiles. The sea-launched missiles were a different matter.

One sub's launch position was within range of a combat patrol of destroyers and frigates. They not only got the missiles, they got the sub launching them. There were no US naval vessels near the second sub and those warheads got through. Given the outcome of the war, the biggest loser was Wal-Mart.

"Don't tell me, I remember, Gar-Bear. Who painted the big 'X' on the US?"

"Actually, I think we did it to ourselves, Ronald. I'm getting too old for this crap. Excuse me if this seems like déjà vu all over again (Yogi)."

"Whadda load of crap, they haven't even cleaned up LA yet."

"There is good news in this."

"Right... pray tell me what it is."

"They probably won't waste a nuke on LA."

"And?"

"We've already been to Barstow."

Better still, Diablo Canyon and San Onofre reactors were scrambled before any missile could strike them. Neither reactor was targeted, better safe than sorry, I guess. The only PRK cities struck in the attack were San Diego and San Francisco, Naval sites. We peaked at 90-95R, the first time we were able to leave in 2 weeks in any of my stories. There is a definite difference between fiction and fact. In fiction, you imagine the worst and hope for the best. In fact, you take what you get and do your Gunny Highway thing.

Was there any good news? Less than half of the people in the housing tract had returned, leaving two-thirds of the homes empty. I don't have to learn Spanish! Both Sheriff's sub-stations (Lancaster & Palmdale) had been stocked after the terrorist attacks and they were able to shelter far more people than the last time. Finally, because of the terrorist attacks, the US had remained on relatively high alert and had made preparations in the event of another radiological emergency. Bottom line... no looting available. Like I told you, the early bird gets the worm.

o

Because we only received miniscule fallout, some of us left the shelter after 2 weeks with the remainder able to leave full time after 38 days. Those among us who didn't really care anymore did what it took to secure the housing tract. Allow me to explain. I read far more survival fiction than I've written. In the good stuff I've read, like 'Lights Out', people need and do develop a cohesive unit, be it their residential block, a small or large housing tract or a neighborhood. The housing tract where I live is one square block surrounded by a 6' high concrete block wall.

The tract was built in 1987 and since then, a tract has been built on the south, causing them to raise the south fence one layer of block. I showed a picture of my house in a previous story:

"If you look here: <http://www.wikimapia.org/#y=34571214&x=-118047302&z=18&l=0&m=a> The '+' is on my house. The smaller white box across the street is Dave (left) and Lance (right). Chris is the house 2 doors left of me and Dick is 2 doors to the left of Chris with the brown roof. We have the only white roof in the housing tract. You can see how big the patio is and even see my shed. I didn't know you could see our home that clearly from space. The black spot to the right of the shed is our shelter. The reason the house looks so large is the white shingles and the back patio. It is 1 foot narrower than the lot."

The picture was taken after we put on the new roof in 2003. Our tract is an enclave, ideal for self-defense and has been a good place to raise children because there is no through traffic. Our house, which originally sold for \$95k, was appraised in 2007 for \$360k during the failing real estate market. That was before we made the internal and external improvements, too. Like the ad on TV, I think our home is priceless; so do some of my neighbors, now.

When the photo was taken, the black square in our backyard was nicely growing sod. Our sprinklers went bad and the sod eventually died. We only had to remove one tree and some roots to put in our homemade bomb shelter. The area now served as our garden.

The war involved two countries, each on a different continent, and was fought primarily with nuclear tipped missiles, many by one side and ultimately few by the other. For sure the Asians used EMP weapons, we may never know about what our side did. Putting our computers in the empty metal storage cabinet saved them after all. I did lose my 21" CRT monitor. We also lost all of the TVs save the one in the shelter. Fortunately, none of them was a big screen LED or plasma screen TV; the new ones are though. We were on the fringe of the EMP or it may have been worse. I'd forgotten about the old one I had in my filing cabinet, it came in handy, later.

o

Now that you've endured my telling you how we got where we are, let me tell what happened next, not something I usually talk about. In the immediate aftermath, all the people, age 50 and above, left the shelter and attempted to resume life as before. We still had water, sewage and natural gas. We didn't have electricity, telephone or cable TV. There was just enough portable generator capacity to keep people's refrigeration going using extension cords.

It became a whole lot better when some unnamed party 'borrowed' 2 60kw trailer mounted tactical quiet diesel generators from the Army National Guard unit on 30th Street East. These newer units would run on JP8 (Jet Fuel A) and there were thousands and thousands of gallons at Palmdale Regional Airport.

The TQGs are skid or trailer mounted generator sets, are "single-fuel" compliant (operate on diesel/JP fuels), have radically improved survivability, mobility, reliability and

maintainability. Noise has been reduced to 70 dbA or less, quiet enough to reduce detection ranges from over a mile to less than 400 meters. The sets are undetectable from the front and sides by ground or airborne FLIR. Weight and size has been reduced by 20%, improving mobility and deployment. Significant improvements (16-19%) were made in maintainability (MTBF) and serviceability (PMCS) – reducing both cost and manpower support costs. Finally, reliability has improved by over 100%. Moreover, they have reduced overall life cycle costs through reduced acquisition costs, lower fuel consumption and reduce O&S costs. Actual sample data collection from fielded sets indicates an average Operational Readiness (OR) rate of 96-99% (depending on size). In Haiti, even under extreme operating and environmental conditions the new TQGs achieved an 89% readiness rate – orders of magnitude better than the old MIL STDs.

Battlefield survivability has been markedly improved by reducing noise by 80%, virtually eliminating IR signatures, and by hardening them against Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) effects. Mobility has been enhanced by reducing weight and size, and maintainability / support has been improved by doubling reliability which reduces costs.

When Generac went to a new 16.1kw model, they sold their existing 15kw gas units to Watchdog. Watchdog's price is \$2,650 with a built in transfer switch. Keep in mind that Generac are home standby, gaseous fueled, generators that run at 3,600rpm and have an engine life of ~3,000 hours.

Not that we needed them, Ron and Lyn moved into one vacant home, temporarily, as did Coty and Brenda. Kevin and John still lived with Ron. We had 120kw for the six homes we cared about and actually enough power for 10 homes. Unlike the previous disaster, the stores didn't reopen soon. In very little time, their shelves were empty. The Sheriff's Department and the National Guard, being the sole Civilian and Military authority in the Antelope Valley, did what they'd done before, went with you to the store and kept the list of what you took. They also implemented rationing.

Although we weren't short of anything, everyone went and got the allowed amount, trying to stay even. Any spare space that could be used as a garden was, even if it meant removing fences and storing the sections to be re-erected later. Certain heretofore unmentionable items would be brought out of hiding and were available to protect our little enclave.

The Hard Way – Chapter 7

We stripped the empty houses taking anything we could use and used some of the spoiled food to produce compost for the gardens. Waste Management brought in a 40 yard debris bin that they replaced when it was full. It was parked at the east end of Moonraker Road. Anything that was trash or that we removed from the homes and couldn't use went into the debris bin. Later, they reduced the size of our bin from 40 yards to 20 yards and finally 10 yards. Power didn't return anytime soon, too much damage to the system. We were informed that power came before phones. The natural gas went to an allocation system and we were allocated enough to supply 10 homes.

"Have you heard about the latest?"

"Latest what, Lance?"

"Oh, sorry, latest move to supply power. Apparently you haven't. Some areas were unaffected by either the terrorist attacks or the missiles from the Chinese. Given the local supply of diesel fuel, some enterprising fellow is making 100 amp Diesel generators available cheaply. He's renting them and they will cost us less than we paid for electricity. Once he's recovered his cost plus 15%, you own the generator. I went over our utility bills and in 15 months, we'd own our generator."

"Ok, what about fuel?"

"They run on JP8."

"So?"

"There are over 1 million gallons of Jet A stored at Plant 42. I used to work there and I have an in. My friend says that if we can supply him some military equipment, he'll provide all the fuel we need, free."

"Same question, so?"

"Have you always been impatient?"

"Yep."

"They have 12 portable trailers, each holding 500 gallons. We can have them to use for the duration. It will cost us half of the military arms we picked up at Barstow the last time."

"We'd only have to shut down our generators to service them?"

"Right and we can switch out the fuel trailers when we do it."

"What about oil and filters for the generators?"

"They're rented, the supplier has spare parts, oil and filters. If one breaks down, he has the ability to rebuild anything that breaks. Once we own the generator, we'll have to pay for repairs but he'll give a 10% discount if you buy all your oil and filters from him."

"It almost sounds too good to be true, Lance. You know what they say, 'if it sounds too good to be true, it is'."

"If we had to pay for the fuel, it wouldn't be a bargain at all, Gary; it would be very expensive electricity. I've seen his spreadsheet on costs of ownership and with free fuel, it's cheaper than electricity. The rent is based on running hours and assumes a 50% load."

"What about transfer panels?"

"Included in the one-time installation cost that is spread over 12 months."

"They hit San Diego?"

"What does that have to do with anything?"

"Our mortgage company was based in San Diego."

"No branches?"

"One, Los Angeles."

My naturally conniving mind was working the numbers at breaking speed. If we could apply the mortgage payments against the price of the generator, we'd own it in a few months. Sitting down in the shelter, it had finally occurred to me that the trust investing solely in Iowa based investments had worked to our favor, this time. For years it had meant a reduced income, less than 4% of the trust balance. One of the President's first moves had been to make certain the banking system was up and running, at a somewhat reduced pace, but running.

It appeared to me that we could get through this and I sat down with Sharon and we discussed all of the options. We could grow about 75% of our food and if we could purchase what we couldn't grow, we'd eat. If we could at least replace the things we couldn't grow or make, we'd be in good shape. We might have to change coffee brands, it depended on whether or not New Orleans was nuked. Somebody would still make toilet paper and probably cigarettes, the problem now lay in distribution.

Earlier I used the term, 'doses of nicotine'. Cigarettes were my first drug addiction. Alcohol would come later. I'd beaten alcohol and would only beat nicotine when smokes were no longer available. It was one of those 'no choice' things. The state had the idea

that they could legislate smoking out of existence. They were wrong. It isn't possible to legislate morality or habits. All they can do is make it more expensive. The same thing might be said about firearms. While they can make them illegal, they can't eliminate them. It gives a better understanding of, 'when guns are outlawed, only outlaws will have guns'. I sort of like 'Black Bart', myself...

o

"Gar-ree!!!"

"It took you long enough to show up, Clarence, this story is pretty well along."

"Huh?"

"Never mind, where have you been?"

"Alabama. We were in Birmingham visiting when the terrorist attacks happened and it's taken us this long to get back." (Real life, they moved back to Birmingham.)

"Heck, partner you missed most of the fun."

"Ron!!! Good to see you. What's new?"

"Terrorist attacked 6 cities and we had World War 2½."

"Shirley and I had just left Albuquerque and figured to be home in 2 days. It took more like 2 months."

"Ron, do we have a full set of equipment for Clarence?"

"What kind of equipment?"

"The usual, M16A3, Beretta 92FS, or, M1911, if you'd prefer. M72 LAWs. Improved flashhider on the M16."

"Like 'Nam, huh?"

"You had an improved flashhider in 'Nam?"

"No, everything else though. How come you fellas have power?"

"We're renting generators and Lance has a friend who is providing us with free fuel. We're running on Jet Fuel A/JP8."

"Do you have any empty homes?"

"Three, but 2 are reserved."

"That means you have one?"

"Yeah, buddy, the last one we're going to occupy. Actually we were hoping you'd show up and make it a genuine Three Amigos story."

"Huh?"

"Who gets the other two homes?"

"Gary's boy's Damien and Derrick, if they ever show up."

"Hey asshole, it's Damon and Derek."

"Whatever. If they show up, I'll deal with it."

"If they show up, you'll have to. Derek is about 4 times a better shot than I am. Say, can you locate Geraldo?"

"Why? I though you hated him."

"I do but it's almost time for target practice."

"Gar-ree! That's not nice."

"That house over there is for you and Shirley, Clarence."

"What, you're not going to rescue me from under my house?"

"You know what, that was a different story, Clarence."

"What's thumper?"

"A weapon in *The Ark*."

"Huh?"

"Never mind, I'll print you a copy."

For the one person who doesn't know, thumper is a 12-gauge Gatling gun I had my friend Robert Root make for me in my very first story, *The Ark*. Thumper is not Bambi's friend; I shot Bambi in 1963 or 1964 up near Conway Summit. I have the horns somewhere.

To quote myself, "The pickup with the Gatling gun, dubbed Thumper because of the distinctive sound it made when fired, held back, it's motor idling."

If you really want Thumper, you'll have to read that story.

We didn't need a 12 gauge Gatling gun; I finally had my M1A rifle. The only thing in the world better than having a M1A is, having 2, unless it's having a target named Geraldo, close in; say 400-yards. You see, some things never change. Definition of an ultra-high value target: an Officer named Geraldo who is a Puerco Rican Jew who likes to give away our troops positions.

Ron, Clarence and I went way back, say 1995. We had a common problem and a common solution. Clarence had the most time, followed by Ron with me being tail end Charlie at 10 years now. If I hadn't have screwed the pooch, it would have been 15, but I paid for that. Man, did I ever.

You already know Clarence's arsenal, a 12 gauge shotgun and a .38 Special revolver. Once they got moved in, we fixed him up, M16A3/M203, M9 and 3 LAWs rockets. I don't really know what he took for hand grenades, a pocketful and more.

This wasn't 2007 where no one could say anything nice about anyone. This was 2009 and we'd endured nukes twice. Obama didn't have as much time in office as George did when he suddenly was forced to deal with 'his worst nightmare'. Up tight guys like George overreact, laid back actors don't, they're used to hearing 'cut' and 'take it from the top'. Ronnie was so laid back; he sometimes fell asleep during meetings. Obama's Senate record didn't reveal an uptight guy.

If the greatest dangers to the earth was global climate change, how did that square with what happened. How would what happened affect global climate change and vice versa? In theory, a GTW would lead to a nuclear winter followed by a nuclear summer. The war was global and it involved thermonuclear weapons, but less than any of the scientists expected. Most of those detonated had been halfway around the world, not here. While I may understand the questions, I don't have all of the answers. I guess I'll just say... it depends.

The war shut down industry for a while. Did the reduction of CO₂ related to this offset the amount of CO₂ generated by the war? I did learn one thing; nuclear winter didn't wait until winter time to happen. I thought we'd have time to plant a garden. We could plant it, but there wasn't enough heat or sunlight for it to grow. That ate up about 30% of our supplies and eliminated some of the variety from our diet.

Worse, over the past several years, the US had been experiencing drought conditions. The last time I checked, Palmdale was in that dark red area indicating severe drought conditions. Not one of us was a meteorologist able to forecast what this all meant. Our back patio provided an inelegant solution to the problem. We used plastic sheeting and built a green house.

Large rolls of heavy clear plastic and 2x4s allowed creation of a greenhouse equal in size to our patio, 8x13+15x53, 900ft². We covered our windows with extra plastic during the summer to keep out heat and took it down and opened the windows later in the year, providing 2-3 growing seasons. That was Patti's idea, not mine. It did help providing vegetables that wouldn't otherwise have been available.

Not long after Clarence showed up and moved in, the other two homes filled when my boys appeared. I put each family in the houses on either side of us. Damon's excuse for coming was to get away from Carrie and Derek and Mary lost their gig managing the apartment complex. It worked out well, I'd been busy.

When we got my 590A1 from High Desert, I was torn between the 590A1 and the 870. I chose the 590A1. Damon, Derek and Mary had an A3 each, one with and one without the M203, plus each had an M9 and an 870 with rifle sights.

They'd had an awful time getting from Arkansas to PRK. Damon had moved south shortly after the terrorist attacks and they had planned a surprise visit for my 66th birthday. The engine went out on his vehicle and he ordered a rebuilt engine; they shipped the wrong one. By the time they got the right one, made other repairs and could leave, he had to go back to Britt and vote for John.

Then some problem arose and delayed him, until just before the war. He took the money he had set aside, grabbed his kids and headed back to Flippin. Derek was looking for a new job when the war came and Damon persuaded them to come to Kali with him. They were set to leave when Little Rock was hit by a warhead, further delaying them and forcing them to find a different route to Palmdale. Then, that... it doesn't matter, they finally made it and we moved them into the two empty homes on either side of me.

My boys knew a few tricks when it came to raising plants in a greenhouse they'd learned from their grandfather Spencer. Herb Spencer was a good teacher, he taught me trapping and it's so imbedded, if I had the traps, I could still do it. Herb, Joyce and then Francis died from cancer. Joyce's twin, Jerry, was a Detective Sergeant in Ames and Jesse, a retired high linesman from Wyoming. He became an 'expert' on raising high towers and pulls down big bucks as a consultant.

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Sometime in the middle of this, after the terrorist attacks and before the war, Lance and Elvia tracked down Joseph and Erica, Dave located his daughters and Dick found Jason and his daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren. I didn't dwell on who was in the shelter the 2nd time because I couldn't keep everyone straight. We had over a dozen extra people and had to sleep in shifts; thank God it was a short stay.

I had reserved an extra generator when I learned of them from Lance, just in case. I figured if the boys could get here, they would. Why is it when things get tough people al-

ways think of their family? Your children represent your future, right? When your time is up, it's your children who carry on the name. If you haven't made it to Heaven by the time the last person forgets you ever existed, you're forgotten for good. They might remember this was my great grandfather's M1A, but they might not know your name.

I'm like the lady who wrote the letter, I don't care. If you don't live in Moon Shadows or I don't know of you, I don't care. Worship whomever you want, however you want, but don't preach to me, 'cause I don't care. Obama cares, but it's his job for the next 3+ years to care. If he decides to do a gun grab, I hope he takes the guns from the party-waist liberals and gives them to Patriotic Republicans. I've got news for you; this is a representative republic, not a democracy. At least it was before the war.

I watched a TV show a few years back on the History Channel called *Decoding the Past: Doomsday 2012 - The End of Days* or some such nonsense. Of all the things said during the program, the one thing that stuck in my mind was that if we survived the mega disaster, people would be forced to revert to a way of living more like a century or more earlier, absent technology. In a word, agrarian. In our early years, the majority of the population of the US was engaged in farming. Would you like to guess as to the largest country of origin for Americans? No, it's not Mexico. How about Germans ~20% and Irish ~11%.

Blue collar who worked in factories or ran the factories, banking and who knows what, insurance? People have insurance often because they don't have a choice. If you do, don't file a claim, one of several things will happen: they pay and cancel you, they'll claim it's not covered, or, they'll claim the size of the disaster prevents them from paying what they owe you.

When California had a rash of earthquakes, the insurance companies stopped providing earthquake coverage, forcing the state to do it. Remember Northridge? That did it! Is a terrorist attack an act of war? Insurance companies probably would answer yes. Most policies exclude Acts of God and Acts of War. Farmer's has since resumed earthquake insurance, e.g., they sell state earthquake insurance.

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"I'm too old for this crap. I thought I had it all figured out; I guess I missed some things."

"What's the matter partner, running low on toilet paper? Cigarettes?"

"Gar-ree, if you'd been born black, you wouldn't feel that way, life's a struggle from the day you're born until the day you die."

"Fellas, we pretty much cornered the market on consumables we can't produce. Obama is seeing to it that what we use up is available. It's not that. Of all the things I could have been in life, that last thing I wanted to be was a farmer."

"Get used to it hoss. At least before, the major gangs were confined to LA, now they're running wild. We have people who can't find a job, people who won't find a job and people nobody would hire if they applied. Those people have to eat too. I'm expecting trouble just because we have about everything a person could ask for."

"Ron if they come in large numbers, Gar-ree is right, they could take us."

"Not without a fight Clarence. Gar-Bear has some quote he likes from Patton. I don't see it the same way as Patton did, we can keep a lot of them out."

"Ronald, the quote is, *Fixed fortifications are monuments to man's stupidity.*"

"Do you plan to string homemade concertina, plant land mines, dig ditches?"

"No, but you can, if you think we need them."

"Why not?"

"We don't have any land mines, concertina might scratch my rifle and I've already dug my hole in the ground."

"Well, the good news is that China's not trying to kill us anymore with their shoddy exports."

"What does that have to do with stringing concertina, planting land mines or digging ditches?"

"Nothing, it just occurred to me. It will eliminate most of the goods from Wal-Mart, Target and Sam's Club. Can we keep this place safe?"

"It would be easier if the Sheriff's Department would resume their patrols."

"What's the deal on that?"

"Apparently they're short on gas for their vehicles. The terrorist attack took out the refineries in greater LA and the war took out the Bay area refineries. California's refineries are located in the San Francisco Bay area, Los Angeles area and the Central Valley. Each day approximately two million barrels (a barrel is equal to 42 US gallons) of petroleum are processed into a variety of products, with gasoline representing about half of the total product volume."

"How many refineries are left?"

"Let me get my list. Let's see, before the attacks, we had 21 refineries in California, read this:"

BP West Coast Products LLC, Carson Refinery
Chevron USA Inc., El Segundo Refinery
Chevron USA Inc., Richmond Refinery
Tesoro Refining & Marketing Company, Golden Eagle (Avon/Rodeo) Refinery
Shell Oil Products US, Martinez Refinery
ExxonMobil Refining & Supply Company, Torrance Refinery
Valero Benicia Refinery
ConocoPhillips, Wilmington Refinery
Shell Oil Products US, Wilmington Refinery
Valero (Ultramar) Wilmington Refinery
ConocoPhillips, Rodeo San Francisco Refinery
Big West of California LLC, Bakersfield Refinery
Paramount Petroleum Corporation, Paramount Refinery
ConocoPhillips, Santa Maria Refinery
Edgington Oil Company, Long Beach Refinery
Kern Oil & Refining Company, Bakersfield Refinery
San Joaquin Refining Company Inc., Bakersfield Refinery
Greka Energy, Santa Maria Refinery
Lunday Thagard, South Gate Refinery
Valero Wilmington Asphalt Refinery
Tenby Inc., Oxnard Refinery

California's nearly 100 terminals receive petroleum and petroleum products by tanker, barge, pipeline, rail or truck. Most of California's terminals are marine terminals. At these facilities petroleum or product is transferred from or to tankers or barges. Tankers loaded with Alaska North Slope petroleum, for example, enter marine terminals in northern and southern California, where the crude oil is then sent to refineries by pipeline for processing. An example of pipeline receipts of petroleum at a terminal is heavy California petroleum produced in the Bakersfield area that is sent by pipeline to a refinery at Martinez.

Terminals also serve as refiner's wholesale distribution points for products. Product, such as gasoline, is sold to distributors (jobbers) who then sell to consumers through the distributors' own retail stations. The distributor may also resell the gasoline to other station dealers. Gasoline can also be sold directly to station dealers from the terminal. The marketing structure differs depending on the type of product being sold.

A terminal can be linked with several refineries and storage facilities and be supplied by privately-owned pipelines or a common carrier line. Total capacity at a terminal can range from a few thousand barrels to a few million barrels. The most apparent equipment at a terminal is the tanks used for storage and separation of different product grades. The number of tanks can range from a few to more than 70. Other equipment found includes piping, pumps, valves, and meters needed for bulk receipts and for loading racks used for small deliveries to trucks. Marine terminals have vessel length and water depth limits that dictate the size of tankers that can off-load at the facility.

"I'd say we have 5 left, if we're lucky. The ones in Santa Maria, Oxnard and Bakersfield should have made it. I suppose it depends on whether or not the first two can get crude."

"How big are the five that are left?"

"They weren't the biggest; altogether, maybe 300,000 barrels a day running at full capacity out of the 2 million barrels a day before. You can expect that the military will take its fuel first and the state and local governments next. If there's any left, it might filter down to us."

"Assuming any of them is running."

"There's that, Ron. I think Bakersfield might stay up. I don't have a map of the pipelines, so I can't tell you where all the oil goes."

"Do you have a plan?"

"No, I have *The Day After Report*, though."

"Why didn't you tell me about that earlier, Gar-Bear?"

"Read it, you'll see why. I didn't mention it earlier because we were following an optimal plan of action."

"You mean most of the things we did were based on your plan?"

"Not mine, it came from a Harvard Workshop. I serious doubt they recommended looting Barstow."

"Did they even know about Barstow?"

"They did if they ever read my stories."

"Gar-ree, you're the John the Baptist of our time, 'Prepare ye the way of the bomb.'"

"Right, I'm a member of the 14th tribe."

"There were only 12."

The Hard Way – Chapter 8

"Thirteen, you forgot the tribe of Ephraim. In parts of the Bible, Ephraim and Manasseh are treated as together constituting the House of Joseph."

If you know what I'm referring to, good for you, I won't explain. You may recall that when it comes to religion, I DON'T CARE. A person would be surprised what a little respect for what the other fellow believes will get you. With the exception of Islam, of course. I was corrected for calling them ragheads. I was told it was more like a sheet. Fine, call them sheetheads, I don't care – until they come here.

WARNING: Would terrorists in possession of a nuclear weapon announce their intention in advance? The Day After Workshop assumed they might not... for three specific reasons. First, catching a city by surprise obviously would increase the amount of destruction and chaos the terrorists could cause. Second, advance notice might risk having the plot foiled before it could be completed. Third, there is no reason to believe that "loose nukes" would come one at a time – wherever terrorists got one weapon, they may have obtained several. Setting off a first bomb with no warning would still permit terrorists to claim that more detonations were to come and to sow widespread panic – a likely tactic of terror even if, in fact, they only obtained a single nuclear weapon.

So it would appear to benefit the attacker to act without warning, and The Day After Workshop accordingly posted this scenario as the most likely. For the responders, if warning did come it would present obvious opportunities to save lives but would also present dilemmas – whether to panic the population on the basis of a possible hoax, whether to "negotiate" with the terrorists on the basis of their demands, and whether to believe that the terrorists had multiple bombs. All these dilemmas are likely on the Day After anyway, since responders will have to assume they are facing a campaign of terror and not a single detonation.

Obviously the title of the workshop came from the ABC movie with Jason Robards, et al. If all those well-educated, famous people are concerned, I may not be the lone voice in the wilderness. I may be a zealot when it comes to nuclear preparedness, I've dodged the bomb most of my life. I've always assumed they wouldn't drop one right on my head. With the passage of time, 'they' went from Russia and China to include North Korea, Iran and who knows, for certain, who else?

The single most likely nuclear event in our future is a terrorist attack using nukes. The second most likely is WW III. WW III might or might not be a 'limited' war, but the devastation won't know the difference. Whether I'm nuts or not, I should draw your attention to the fact that Muslims have long memories, they've been fighting the Crusades for 1,000 years. Say, did Robin Hood really fight in the Crusades? Maybe you'd like to know what I think it will be like after the war, for a change.

Read this:

British officials have stopped an Iranian effort to purchase weapon-grade uranium from international smugglers, the London Observer reported yesterday (6/10/07).

Over 20 months, British intelligence services monitored a group of British citizens who successfully acquired the uranium from the Russian black market, according to the Observer. The smugglers planned to sell the material to Iran through a middleman in Sudan, investigators said.

Authorities disrupted the plot in early 2006 before the uranium was delivered.

They have arrested one person who has been charged with trying to proliferate weapons of mass destruction. In addition, officials have closed down a British business, the Observer reported.

The Observer did not report the quantity of seized uranium, the identity of the arrested individual or the name of the shuttered company.

"Real credit must go to the enforcement authorities that they have disrupted this," said Roger Berry, chairman of Parliament's arms-monitoring Quadripartite Committee. "The really worrying aspect is that if one company is involved, are there others out there?" British officials said their investigations were continuing, in part by monitoring a number of British residents. Investigators said they have discovered the first solid confirmation that al-Qaeda personnel have been actively seeking nuclear weapon materials and technology.

Meanwhile, officials in Vienna canceled a meeting planned for today that they had originally described as an opportunity for Iran to offer more information about its nuclear activities, the Associated Press reported.

Iranian negotiator Javad Vaidi was set to meet with Olli Heinonen, the top inspections officials at the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, according to AP. The session was aborted, however, after it became clear that Vaidi would offer "nothing substantial," said one diplomat.

Iran might have hoped that the meeting would delay the onset of another round of UN Security Council sanctions, AP reported. The council has twice imposed economic penalties against Iran after Tehran defied council demands to freeze the nation's uranium enrichment program. Another deadline passed last month and the United States has begun to press for a third round of sanctions.

US officials would probably expand that push this week at the agency's Board of Governors meeting, beginning today, AP reported.

Opening that session, agency head Mohamed ElBaradei continued to express his exasperation with Iran's nuclear transparency.

"Against the background of many years of undeclared activities, and taking into account the sensitivity of nuclear enrichment technology, it is incumbent on Iran to work urgently with the agency, under a policy of full transparency and active cooperation, in order for the agency to be able to provide assurance regarding the exclusively peaceful nature of all of Iran's nuclear activities," he told the 35-nation board.

"I am increasingly disturbed by the current stalemate and the brewing confrontation – a stalemate that urgently needs to be broken, and a confrontation that must be defused. I continue to believe that dialogue and diplomacy are ultimately the only way to achieve the negotiated solution foreseen in the relevant Security Council resolutions," he said. "The earlier that conditions are created to move in this direction, the better."

In Washington, the Bush administration Friday announced that it had frozen the accounts of four Iranian companies, claiming they were involved with WMD proliferation, Agence France-Presse reported.

The Treasury Department identified the four as Pars Tarash, Farayand Technique, Fajr Industries Group and Mizan Machine Manufacturing Group.

"So long as Iran continues to pursue a nuclear program in defiance of the international community's calls to halt enrichment, we will continue to hold those responsible to account for their conduct," said Treasury Undersecretary Stuart Levey.

Gee, all the places mentioned in the movie, what a coincidence... That was an old article that seemed to best explain what I was trying to say.

None of us got a lethal dose of radiation although some of us would probably get cancer someday. It didn't matter because there wasn't anything we could do about it. We had a generation of children and the generation after, our grandchildren to keep our attention. This was very serious business for a crowd of old people to handle. I was very serious about not planting mines, digging ditches or hanging concertina, they were dangerous to ours as well as theirs and we didn't have any mines. I asked them did we want to wave a flag telling them we had something to protect. OTOH did we want to appear to be prudent as in moving that school bus across the entrance?

If we did that, I reasoned, we could get by with a couple of guards with the remainder of the people on call 24/7. Lance disputed my assertion, clearly stating that, for the present, we needed a roving patrol of some kind, keeping an eye on that enclosing wall. It's one person, one vote and I was outvoted. I suggested we get another pair of wheelchairs and the 3 Amigos would pull the day shift.

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If you can't believe me, would you believe the Director of the FBI?

"Good morning. It is an honor to be here with all of you today.

"My thanks to Governor Crist and Mayor Diaz for joining us this morning, and to all those who organized this conference.

"I also want to welcome Assistant Secretary John Rood and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Kislyak from the Kazakhstan conference. We appreciate your joining us, especially given the time difference.

"We are here to discuss one of the most dangerous and deadly threats we face: nuclear terrorism. Few threats fall into the same class in terms of sheer devastation, damage, and loss. Few strike such fear in the hearts of the public. And few threats are so appealing to terrorists around the world, for the same reasons.

"It has been said that the September 11th attacks were a 'failure of imagination'. We cannot fail to imagine the consequences of a nuclear terrorist attack. Nor can we fail to imagine that there are those for whom such an event is the end game.

"Prevention must be our end game. Should there be a nuclear attack anywhere in the world, it would mean in some sense that we have failed in our mission. That is why we are here this week.

"This morning, I want to talk about the threat of nuclear terrorism. I want to touch on our collective efforts in the United States to keep our citizens safe. And I want to discuss what we in the international community must do to contain this threat.

"Our roadmap is clear. We must start with the source: we must secure loose nuclear material. We must share intelligence about those who wish to buy and sell such material, and we must stop those who do. Most importantly, we must stand strong together, for nuclear terrorism is a global threat that requires a global response.

"By some estimates, there is enough highly enriched uranium in global stockpiles to construct thousands of nuclear weapons. And it is safe to assume that there are many individuals who would not think twice about using such weapons.

"The economics of supply and demand dictate that someone, somewhere, will provide nuclear material to the highest bidder, and that material will end up in the hands of terrorists.

"Al Qaeda has demonstrated a clear intent to acquire weapons of mass destruction. In 1993, Osama bin Laden attempted to buy uranium from a source in the Sudan. He has stated that it is Al Qaeda's duty to acquire weapons of mass destruction. And he has made repeated recruiting pitches for experts in chemistry, physics, and explosives to join his terrorist movement.

"Bin Laden is no small thinker. Prior to 2001, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed – the mastermind of the September 11th attacks – suggested flying a small plane filled with explo-

sives into CIA Headquarters. As noted by the 9/11 Commission, bin Laden reportedly asked him, "Why do you use an axe when you can use a bulldozer?"

"If 9/11 was the 'bulldozer' of which bin Laden spoke, we can only imagine the impact of a full-scale nuclear attack.

"Unfortunately, Al Qaeda central is not our only concern. We face threats from other terrorist cells around the world, and from homegrown terrorists who are not affiliated with Al Qaeda, but who are inspired by its message of hatred and violence.

"Several rogue nations – and even individuals – seek to develop nuclear capabilities. Abdul Khan, for example, was not only the father of Pakistan's nuclear bomb, he peddled that technology to North Korea, Libya, and Iran. Khan was one of many to prove that it is indeed a seller's market in the so-called atomic bazaar.

"We have often said that the next terrorist attack is not a question of if, but when. If we up the ante to a nuclear terrorist attack, we know it is a question of if, but we cannot let it become a question of when. Now is the time to act.

"I want to talk for a moment about our collective roles in combating nuclear terrorism. While the FBI investigates all acts of terrorism in the United States, the prevention of a nuclear attack is a responsibility shared by many. Our investigations are joint efforts in every sense.

"In October 2005, for example, a radiation sensor at the Port of Colombo, in Sri Lanka, triggered an alarm for an outbound shipping container. The container was sent to sea before it could be examined.

"Working with their Sri Lankan counterparts, personnel from the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Energy determined that the suspect container could be on one of six ships, three of which were bound for New York. Officials around the world, from Italy to India, screened various containers on these ships as they moved from port to port. Scientists from Lawrence Livermore Nuclear Laboratory worked with FBI experts to analyze why the sensor may have been triggered, and whether any of the containers held weapons-grade nuclear material. FBI agents and analysts searched computer databases for criminal or terrorist ties to the ships in question.

"We worked with our state and local counterparts in New York and New Jersey to put response plans into place. As three of the ships pulled into the Port of Newark, FBI personnel and officials from the United States Coast Guard, and Customs and Border Protection, screened and secured several containers.

"Although this investigation turned out to be nothing more than the disposal of scrap metal mixed with radioactive material, it illustrates the need for a quick and a coordinated response.

"That coordination begins with training. We need to know how best to respond to a pending threat before a real need arises. To that end, we routinely train with federal, state, and local agencies and first responders.

"The FBI's Hazardous Devices School, for instance, provides bomb disposal training, using state-of-the-art equipment. In the past 36 years, we have trained more than 20,000 first responders, and nearly 3,000 bomb technicians stand ready to respond if we are threatened with a nuclear terrorist attack.

"We also train our law enforcement counterparts across the country and around the world to detect, deter, and disrupt weapons of mass destruction. Field exercises include the smuggling, sale, transport, and use of hazardous material.

"The International Counter-proliferation Program, for example, is a partnership of the FBI, the Department of Defense Threat Reduction Agency, and the Department of Homeland Security.

"Together, we are training our foreign partners in WMD detection, border security, undercover investigations, nuclear forensics, and crisis management. To date, we have trained more than 5,000 participants from more than 23 countries.

"This September, for example, four of our partners in this Global Initiative – Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, and Georgia – will participate in an integrated exercise. We will run a hypothetical threat of a radiological dispersal device from start to finish, to see whether we are solid, and where we need to improve.

"By training together, we can better work together. In recent years, we have worked with many of you on highly sensitive matters related to the trafficking and threatened use of nuclear material. I am not able to discuss those cases today, because the details remain classified.

"The mere existence of these cases, however, with buyers seeking to obtain nuclear materials and willing sellers peddling samples, illustrates the size and the seriousness of the threats we face. These cases also illustrate the continued need for information sharing and collaboration.

"Let me spend a moment discussing how best to contain the threat of nuclear terrorism. We all face the prospect that at some point in the near future, a terrorist will steal, smuggle, buy, or build a nuclear weapon. We must focus on prevention; we cannot afford to wait for a calling card to announce an attack.

"Strong intelligence is our primary asset. We must collect intelligence from those closest to the threat, from port security and border control to state and local law enforcement. And we must share that intelligence with those who need it.

"But intelligence alone is not enough. If we uncover information about potential nuclear trafficking or a pending plot, we must be able to move at a moment's notice.

"We cannot sit back and wait for others to act. 'To do so is to continue to feed the crocodile, hoping he will eat you last,' as Winston Churchill once said. Our safety lies in protecting not just our own interests, but our collective interests.

"We cannot simply hope that stockpiles will be secure, that smugglers will somehow be stopped, that devices will fail to detonate. Hope alone will not suffice.

"Each and every country must safeguard its nuclear material. Those who run the black market must be locked up and shut down. Possessing, peddling, and purchasing nuclear material must be prosecuted. And terrorists must be cut off at the source.

"Our greatest weapon is unity. That unity is built on intelligence and interagency cooperation. It is built on the idea that, together, we are smarter and stronger than we are standing alone.

"No person, no police officer, no agency, and no country can prevent a nuclear terrorist attack on its own. There are too many unlocked doors and unknown players, too many ports and porous borders.

"Yet together, we can stop the smuggling of nuclear material. We can stop those who seek to buy such material on the black market. And we can stop terrorists from using this technology to threaten our citizens. We can, and we must.

"Throughout the Cold War, the threat of nuclear attack loomed large. In 1962, at the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis, President Kennedy addressed the American people, saying, 'My fellow citizens, let no one doubt that this is a difficult and dangerous effort on which we have set out ... Many months of sacrifice and self-discipline lie ahead ... months in which many threats and denunciations will keep us aware of our dangers. But the greatest danger of all would be to do nothing.'

"The dark days of the Cold War have been relegated to the history books. The United States and Russia ultimately resolved many of their differences through deft diplomacy. But terrorists do not want a seat at the diplomatic table. They do not respond to reason or rationale, nor do they share any desire for peace and prosperity. Quite the opposite, in fact.

"Indeed, the greatest danger for each of us here today would be to do nothing. We must take action. And we must do so together. Our safety can only be secured with the help of the international community.

"Years ago, we stood across from one another, divided by walls and different ways of life. Today, we stand together in this Global Initiative. We are united in a common

cause. It is my sincere hope that in the years to come, we will have no need to meet to address this threat. Let us begin to make that hope a reality."

Nobody listened to him, either. Why did Truman say he fired MacArthur? To prevent the third world war (I saw it on Military Channel). He was quoted in Time Magazine as saying, "I fired him [MacArthur] because he wouldn't respect the authority of the President. I didn't fire him because he was a dumb son of a bitch, although he was, but that's not against the law for generals. If it was, half to three-quarters of them would be in jail."

The Truman administration feared that such an action would greatly escalate the war into full-scale conflict with China and possibly draw China's ally, the Soviet Union, into the conflict. Angered by Truman's desire to maintain a "limited war," MacArthur began issuing important statements to the press, warning them of a crushing defeat.

In February 1952, Truman's approval mark stood at 22% according to Gallup polls, the all-time lowest approval mark for an active American President, until Dubya. Would a single digit refer to Hitler's approval rating or IQ? I just asked, inquiring minds want to know.

Give 'em Hell Harry is regarded as the 10th most popular President.

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We tried many things to grow food in the greenhouse including planting potatoes in compost. Some things worked, some didn't. We did well enough that we could feed the occupants of ten homes, the entire population of the tract. I didn't have heirloom seeds for everything and had to use hybrids from time to time. I did have heirlooms for everything I liked.

Winter lasted from the early spring attack until spring, 2010. The country took aid from anyone who didn't put strings on it, including Russia. They were a lot like the Japanese after Katrina hit New Orleans, offering \$10,000 in aid. I don't know what Obama said to him, but Vladimir changed his mind and began shipping us oil. He was also appointed Foreign Minister.

The valley's first main industry as a part of the United States was agriculture. Historically known regionally for its extensive alfalfa fields and fruit crops, farmers now are growing a wider variety of crops, such as carrots, onions, lettuce, and potatoes. As housing tracts continued to build in the middle of the valley, the farm operations were now found farther to the west and east sides than in previous decades.

The farmers/ranchers grew more than the remaining population could eat, allowing them to export food all over the country. Remaining population? Yes, about 25% of the pre-terrorist attack population, maybe 150,000, now; not counting the Bad Guys. We had a few gangs come up out of LA and the Sheriff dealt with them before the war. After the war there were more, forcing us to deal with them.

To enable the wheelchair patrol and assist in growing food, all of the fences were dismantled in sections and stacked. They'd either be put back up or burned for fire wood. Most of them were 20 years old and would probably burn as fast as gasoline. While Ron, Clarence and I couldn't see the entire perimeter block wall, we could see most of it. Rather than strap a lot of weight on the chairs, we used those rifle racks you generally see in pickup back windows. We had to get Chris to build an attachment to keep the chairs from tipping over backwards when we got off.

Even though we didn't need to do much salvaging after the war, we did some. Some things needed to be replaced, like my TV. My DVD player still worked and we had most of the movies ever made.

What do you do when you don't have land mines and your perimeter is actually too large to guard? You take a lesson from history. You go ask your neighbor what Charlie did against us. While an older person more familiar with Vietnam might not be tricked by punji pits, those punks born in the '70s, '80s, or later, had no idea what a punji pit was. You know, don't you?

o

Hey punk, read this:

The Punji stick or Punji stake is a type of a non-explosive booby trap. It is a simple spike, made out of wood or bamboo, generally placed upright in the ground. Punji sticks are usually deployed in substantial numbers.

Punji sticks would be placed in areas likely to be passed through by enemy troops. The presence of punji sticks may be camouflaged by natural undergrowth, crops, grass, brush or similar materials. They were often incorporated into various types of traps; for example, a camouflaged pit into which a man might fall. Sometimes a pit would be dug with punji sticks in the sides pointing downward at an angle. A soldier stepping into the pit would find it impossible to remove his leg without doing severe damage, and injuries might be incurred by the simple fact of falling forward while one's leg is in a narrow, vertical, stake-lined pit. Such pits would require time and care to dig the soldier's leg out, immobilizing the unit longer than if the foot were simply pierced, in which case the victim could be evacuated by stretcher or fireman's carry if necessary.

Punji sticks were sometimes deployed in the preparation of an ambush. Soldiers lying in wait for the enemy to pass would deploy punji sticks in the areas where the surprised enemy might be expected to take cover, thus soldiers diving for cover would impale themselves.

The tip of the punji stick was frequently smeared with feces, poison, or other contaminants to promote infection in the wound created by the sharpened stick penetrating the soldier's skin.

The point of penetration was usually in the foot or lower leg area. Punji sticks were not necessarily meant to kill the person who stepped on it; rather they were designed to wound the enemy and tie up his unit while the victim was evacuated to a medical facility.

o

"It's not that it's a bad idea. It's just that it doesn't take people too long to figure it out. All you need is one guy to see someone get hurt by a punji stick and they'll pass the word. I won't say that once we knew about them in 'Nam, nobody was ever hurt by one, but, there are better things we could do."

"Huh? Name one!"

"How about the grenade in the can hooked to the tripwire idea? If a guy is moving along slowly, the grenade may go off while he's still in range."

"Are you sure that they cleaned out Barstow?"

"That's what I heard."

"Do you know if they checked every single munitions bunker and igloo?"

"I don't."

"Do you still have the list?"

"I do."

"Anyone feel like going to Barstow?"

"What are you looking for?"

"Anti-personnel mines."

"Which ones?"

"All of them."

WASHINGTON, Feb. 27, 2004 – The US military will stop using always-armed, live landmines after 2010 under a new government policy announced by senior officials at a State Department news briefing today.

The United States will become "the first major military power to adopt a policy ending use of all persistent landmines and maintaining the international standard of detect abil-

ity for landmines of any kind," said Lincoln Bloomfield, assistant secretary of state for political-military affairs.

American military de-miners, as well as those from other nations, Bloomfield said, already are involved in marking, monitoring and clearing live minefields left at the end of hostilities in at least 40 countries.

Each year thousands of people fall victim to live landmines buried around the world, Bloomfield said. US forces, he pointed out, didn't leave those mines behind – except for the potential exception of landmines remaining after the Vietnam conflict from three decades ago.

"The worldwide humanitarian (landmine) crisis is very much the product of persistent landmines used by other militaries or non-state actors who did not observe the international conventions relating to the use of these munitions," Bloomfield said.

"Future American military use of landmines engineered to self-deactivate after a specific period of time should save civilian lives without taking away a key defensive weapon," he noted.

Bloomfield said the new policy doesn't impact on old-style contact landmines used on the Korean Peninsula to deter possible North Korean aggression against South Korea.

Joseph Collins, deputy assistant secretary of defense for stability operations, also at the briefing, said the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff and the military services were involved participants in the development of the new landmine policy.

The new policy requires DOD to develop and use more sophisticated, civilian-friendly landmines in the future, Collins said, noting that landmines would remain an important component of the US military's weapons inventory.

Landmines are employed as force-multipliers, Collins explained, "allowing us to fight and win with fewer forces against numerically superior opponents," while protecting American troops.

Houston, we have a problem...

The Army will detonate approximately 80 non-self-destructing landmines at Crane Army Ammunition Activity (AAA), Ind., as part of ceremonies commemorating final destruction of the US-based stockpile of more than 3.3 million non-self-destructing anti-personnel landmines, at 1 p.m. (EST), on June 30. Media tours of the site will start at 10:30 a.m. (EST). Crane AAA is located 35 miles south of Bloomington, Ind.

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Destruction of these landmines marks another significant milestone in the President's initiatives aimed at eliminating the danger anti-personnel landmines poses to civilians in the aftermath of a war.

On May 16, 1996, the President directed the destruction of all US non-self-destructing anti-personnel landmines, except for those needed for the defense of the Republic of Korea, by December 31, 1999.

The US will retain approximately one million non-self-destructing landmines, most of which are stockpiled on the Korean Peninsula. Small numbers will also be maintained at various training locations for de-mining training purposes.

Question, what is a small number? Where are those training locations? The more I learned about Bill Clinton, the more I disliked him.

We didn't know what we would find; didn't recognize some of the nomenclature on Lance's list, but we went. If nothing else, we could get Claymore's and set them up to be command detonated. In American English that means using that you have to use the M57 device to set it off.

We found so many Claymore mines, we had to go back for a second time just to haul the obvious stores. That's when we discovered the problems with the Claymore Mine. No, not the battery detonator, they replaced those with the M57. The problem with a M18A1 is that it has to be 16 meters, ~50' away from anything behind it, like our concrete block wall. On top of that, it throws those 700 steel balls a very long way, at least 50 meters, 164'. When there wasn't that choke & puke next door, Tom's #27, we had room to put in Claymore Mines.

Our south was a housing tract, the east was the choke and puke and the north was Avenue R with a new mall across the road. The west side was open space until it reached 45th Street East, which was in front of Grecian Isle Trailer Park. We should have looked for concertina.

Concertina wire is a type of barbed wire or razor wire that is formed in large coils which can be expanded like a concertina. Each coil actually consists of two oppositely wound helices which support each other against crushing while allowing easy longitudinal movement. In conjunction with plain barbed wire and steel pickets, it is used to form military wire obstacles. During WW I soldiers manufactured concertina wire themselves, using ordinary barbed wire. Today it is factory made.

Concertina wire packs flat for ease of transport, but can then be deployed as an obstacle much more quickly than ordinary barbed wire.

A platoon of soldiers can deploy a single concertina fence at a rate of about a kilometer per hour. Such an obstacle is not very effective by itself, and concertinas are normally built up into more elaborate patterns as time permits.

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"Why didn't you say something?"

"Dad, you wouldn't have believed me. If this little band wasn't so sad, it would be downright funny."

"What, we aren't soldiers because we can't bench press 300 pounds?"

"I'm not sure I could bench press 300 pounds. You do have to be able to pick up that rifle. How fast can you run?"

"I can't."

"Can't what, run?"

"Right, not since 2003. I'm in my upper '60s. When I was 20 years old I couldn't run a mile."

"The Air Force has physical standards."

"Yeah, I know, they were adopted when I was in; that's why I didn't reenlist."

"So, besides being able to shoot well, what else can you do?"

"I can think, Derek. They claim one year of college is equal to 4 years of actual experience. I have a Master's Degree and 20 years of practice."

"Practice doing what?"

"Catching tax cheats, I understand how they think."

"What good is that?"

"A thief is a thief. The old saying was 'set a thief to catch a thief'. Not only was I trained to be a thief, I was good at it."

"Is that why you're a scrounger in your stories?"

"I loot, but call it strategic reallocation so it sounds better."

I could barely pick up the Tac-50, which was lighter than a Barrett M82, and the M1A was really more my speed. I was, however, a sneaky son of a gun. Most of the websites I visited stressed the importance of physical conditioning. Heck, I couldn't get in shape with a trowel. OTOH, I usually had a plan B.

To do it right, concertina must be installed in layers. The probability was that no one but the bad guys being on the other side of the wall if we were attacked. So why not install enough concertina to keep 'em back from the wall and risk installing Claymores 25 meters apart pointing in the correct direction? If they came from the choke & puke, we could take it out and clear the field.

Even if there was only a couple of Deputies in town when we were attacked, surely a large volume of gunfire would bring them running. If it didn't, a few hand grenades or maybe one of those rockets would bring both them and the military. When the mines went off, we'd get people from San Bernardino.

◦

Bottom line was I was ill-prepared to live in the days after. In fact, I'd been a mite short on getting along in the days before. Regardless of what we'd accumulated in the ordnance department, I gave the kids the parkerized 8-shot 870s with rifle sights and loved my 590A1.

Wheelchairs are difficult to balance. If you hang too much on the back, you have to add something to keep it from tipping over. The same condition applies to the front and Chris said that by the time he built and installed a pintle mount, the chair would be too heavy. I was forced to leave the big rifle at home and carry the Winchester rifle (not carbine). The only difference between a rifle and carbine is the barrel length and this one had a 24" barrel, but the cartridge left a lot to be desired.

If I could find one, I was in the market for a Marlin 1895 Cowboy. The rifle was chambered in .45-70 and if .45-70 was good enough for Custer, it was good enough for me. I hope that didn't mean that, if I got one, I'd end up the same way. Probably not, the Indians were all running casinos now, not that they had many customers these days.

We took a bag of cash and took a day trip. Out east where the Indians had cigarette stores on the Res. I think we might have gotten gouged, they were charging the same as grocery stores and the smokes didn't have much tax on them. For Indians, that is; read the Chemehuevi case to find out how Kali screwed the people again.

While I was at Edwards, the California excise tax on smokes was 3¢ a pack and now it was 87¢ a pack, if you could find any. It was a supply and demand issue and most people couldn't afford the gas to go after smokes, assuming you could find gas. Man did we have a lot of gas in my backyard tank. It was probably worth \$10 a gallon, had I wanted to sell it, which I didn't. Maybe I could trade a few gallons for a Marlin 1895 Cowboy and some ammo. Note, the Marlin 1894 Cowboy is .45 Colt, .357 or .44 magnum.

Did you get the impression I like guns? Gee, I can't imagine why. Way back when, the founding fathers of this country thought they were necessary. Maybe a necessary 'evil', the jury is out on that one. Let's assume for a moment that this story is true instead of the 56th version of the same basic story. Your government didn't protect you from the terrorists and they failed to protect you from the Chinese. For crying out loud, they stripped your rights already in the name of security, calling it the USA PATRIOT Act. Next they set up this agency, the Department of Homeland Insecurity, to protect you even more.

At one time, we actually had Civil Defense. It became FEMA and FEMA became part of, you guessed it, Homeland Insecurity. Do you feel secure now? If you do, I know how you vote, straight liberal. Way back when, FDR got this little law passed called Federal Insurance Contributions Act. You know it as Social Security. You don't have a choice, if you work, you pay. For that matter, so does your employer. If you're self-employed, you pay double. On top of that, they've changed the law so some people never pay out. Because I became disabled well before retirement age, I've benefited from the plan, until they cut it off. I sure hope Obama will make this right, but I'm not holding my breath.

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I was telling you about our winter. It lasted from the attack until the following spring, about a year. Then it got hot. Although it's normally hot in Palmdale, this was ridiculous. We're talking 130° in the shade. We were better off than the rest because we had a white roof and a patio to shade the south wall of our house. The only comfortable place to be was in the shelter. We couldn't do that because we had to patrol and when too many people got in the shelter, it warmed up.

There are cold weather crops:

Lettuce

Make your own salad by growing lettuce. There is more to lettuce than just that Iceberg lettuce. Romaine and wild lettuces make a great addition to your salad. There are so many varieties of lettuce that it's hard to name just a few, as many are very tasty.

Lettuce is a cool weather crop and prefers it when the days and nights are cooler than 70 degrees. You can often buy some lettuce plants at greenhouses, but it is just as easy to grow lettuce by seed. Buy some lettuce seed and place the seed in the soil in rows. You can scatter the seeds in the bed, or you could make a pattern. Head and Romaine lettuces need more space than wild and loose-leaf type lettuces. On average, you should plant the lettuce plants about six inches apart.

When the weather is too hot, lettuce will bolt or send up a flower stalk, and it often becomes bitter at this point. Luckily, there are lettuces that are resistant to bolting.

Peas

Peas are cool weather crops. For most climates, they can be planted in early spring for a late spring harvest and late summer for a fall harvest.

There are many different types of peas, including the snap peas and the pod peas. The pod peas are peas that need shelling when they are mature. Their pods will be shed and the remaining peas can be frozen, cooked, canned or boiled. The snap peas have edible pods. They can be left on the plant to swell and be used like pod peas, or they can be stir-fried or eaten raw in salads.

Peas like nitrogen-rich soil but most times the nitrogen in the soil has to be fixed in a form that is usable by plants. This is usually done by bacteria in the soil. Some pea gardeners use an inoculant, bacteria that are added to the soil to help nitrogen fixation. This can help the pea production.

Pea blossoms are edible, but if you choose to eat them, they will not grow the peas themselves. You can grow extra for this purpose if you choose to eat pea blossoms.

You can also do successive planting with peas to extend your harvest, much like with beans. Peas also will vine and generally require support. You can buy a pea fence or you can make one yourself using garden stakes and some garden twine.

Drill holes in the garden stakes or use ties to tie the twine on the stakes. Start by taking twine and placing it horizontally between the garden stakes. You should make as many of these as possible, but keep about four inches in between the strips of twine. Then take the twine and weave it in and out of the horizontal strips. The more jagged the design, the more the peas love it.

Peas have tendrils that grab onto just about anything, so be sure you have plenty of twine for them to grab onto. The pea fence should be at least three feet high but preferably four feet or more as most peas can reach this height in a very short period of time in the right conditions.

Carrots

When most people think of carrots, they think of long, thin orange ones. But the original carrots were most likely white and possibly a darker maroon color. There are many varieties of carrots that can be grown, from the long thin style to the smaller thumb sized carrots.

Carrots prefer cool weather for the best germination and growth. They tend to take a long time to germinate, sometimes as long as two weeks to push through the soil. They are better when planted with radishes, a quick growing crop that does a few things for the carrots. First, the radish marks the rows so you can weed the carrot bed while you wait for the long germination time. Secondly, the radishes give you more space to grow

more. Thirdly, the radishes push and break up the soil so that carrots, which are weaker in stem strength can push up more easily and readily through the soil.

Carrots take two to three months to fully mature but can be picked early as baby carrots. The greens are often tasty treats for deer and pesky rabbits, but they can be covered or onions can be planted among them to keep these animals at bay.

Do not plant carrots near dill (a common herb) as the carrots may cross-pollinate and that could result in a less productive season. Carrots also prefer a sandy soil, so adding some sand to the soil is a good bet. Carrots will also get hairy roots if over-fertilized.

Cole Crops (Broccoli, Cauliflower and Brussels Sprouts)

The cole crops are commonly known by the names such as Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts or Cauliflower. These cool weather crops are grouped together because they are very similar in culture and growth.

These plants often grow to be two or three feet high and just as wide, so give them space when you plant them. They will tend to wilt in higher temperature days. Keep them watered regularly and they should perk back up when the sun starts to go down.

Common pests of these plants are the cabbage butterfly, slugs and snails. The cabbage butterfly is an early emerging butterfly. If you see a small white butterfly flitting around the yard, it is most likely a cabbage white butterfly. It will lay its eggs on the cole crops. When they emerge, they are little green caterpillars that can quickly devastate a crop of broccoli, cauliflower or Brussels Sprouts.

You can manually pick off the caterpillars if you see them. There are also sprays or you can make your own spray using onion and cayenne pepper added to water. Add the onion and cayenne or even fresh hot peppers (any will do, but the hotter the better) to a blender. Add some garlic too. Add some water and blend to a puree. Then strain it out into a spray bottle and spray the plants you want to protect. Most insects and pests don't like the smell or taste and will avoid it. Reapply after a heavy soaking or rain; each night would be fine.

Spring is never too early to plan for your vegetable garden. There are many different varieties of plants to use for your vegetable garden. Cool weather crops have their place too.

And, there are hot weather crops:

Hot Peppers

Peppers are great plants to grow in your garden. Why? They are a main ingredient in salsa and hot sauces. Even the peppers that are mildly hot can be used in the kitchen.

Peppers can be dried through traditional methods such as tying up, much like herbs, or slow roasting them on low heat in the oven for a few hours. The peppers can then be ground up into spices. Cayenne is a popular pepper to dry and use ground up.

Peppers are easy to grow even if you have a shorter growing season than some. Hot peppers tend to take a little longer than the sweet peppers (such as banana and bell peppers) and are better to start seeds inside or start by transplants.

They are similar to tomatoes in growth and likes and dislikes. Not many pests affect peppers, as the leaves and stems are quite nasty and are toxic to most creatures when ingested.

Tomatoes

There is nothing like a ripe, red, juicy tomato, or even a few cherry tomatoes or some green and yellow tomatoes. Red is just the traditional color everyone thinks of when they hear about tomatoes. But the other colors are quite tasty and great in pastas.

Tomatoes are quite easy to grow. There are many types of tomatoes that even grow well in shorter season climates such as the northern United States. In most cases, starting the seeds inside under grow lights or buying transplants is the way to grow the best tomatoes. Tomatoes like warm climates and do not tolerate frost well even when well established.

Cherry tomatoes are a fun tomato to grow. Cherry tomatoes are like miniature tomatoes. They are small and usually very sweet. They are fun to grow in containers and great to use in salads or as a snack for the kids.

Squash (and Family)

These are probably the easiest of the vegetables to grow, especially when the weather is very warm. They are warm weather crops and don't tolerate frost well. But they love the warmth of the color black and often grow vigorously when planted in old tires.

Zucchini are in the squash family and are very similar in culture to squash. There are many varieties of squash including the winter squash which matures later. Pumpkins are closely related and also do well in tires and containers.

Take an old tire and fill in with soil. A good soil mixture would contain amounts of perlite or vermiculite to help moisture retention. Since these plants are planted during the hot summer season, they will need lots of moisture retention properties. Mound up the soil in the center of the tire and plop in three to four squash seeds.

Cucumbers

Fresh cucumbers from the garden are a wonderful addition to your salad or even just as

they are. They are similar to squash in that they love warm weather. You can grow the cucumbers, like the squash, in tires and in mounds of soil.

There are two main types of cucumbers: the vining ones and the bush types. The vining cucumbers will vigorously produce in the best conditions. They might produce all summer long. They might also need some sort of trellis to grow on or a long piece of yard since they vine out everywhere. Better yet, grow your cucumbers along with your corn and they will use your corn stalks as a pole to climb on. That way you don't waste space.

The bush type cucumbers grow in bush fashion, only growing so high and so wide when they produce. These cucumbers are great for container gardening or if you don't have a lot of space.

Beans

Beans are wonderful to grow and there is so much taste in fresh green beans. There are many varieties of beans that you can grow.

Pole beans can grow quite tall and get out of hand if not ready for their vigorous vining growth. They will need some sort of support. A pole bean tower is recommended. This tower is a six foot (or higher) tower that allows the beans to climb up the tower in a smaller area. It makes it easier to harvest the beans.

Bush beans are beans that don't quite grow as prolific as their pole bean counterparts, but they can produce just as much if the conditions are right. Bush beans are great for containers and smaller areas.

While green beans are the most popular, beans do come in many shapes and sizes, even colors. You will get the most out of beans if you harvest regularly. They will be ready to harvest in as little as 60 days from planting. If you want smaller yet extended harvests of the beans, then succession planting is recommended. Succession planting is planting a row, then waiting about two to three weeks, and planting another row. That way, the rows will mature and produce at different times, giving an extended harvest.

Corn

Corn can be planted in late spring if the temperature stays above freezing. As long as there isn't a chance of frost, it can be grown. The ground should be warm though because germination rates will be much higher in warmer temperatures.

Corn is planted by seed usually in rows. Corn does better if a lot is planted. At least a five-foot plot is recommended to get the best results and best pollination rates. Corn self-pollinates but it needs other corn near it to do so, so it is vital to have several rows of corn.

Corn growth is dictated by large amounts of space, but there is corn that is better for smaller spaces. This corn doesn't grow quite as tall or long as the other varieties.

Push the corn seed at least a half inch into the ground. This helps avoid common pests such as birds and other seed eating creatures. Cover the seeds and make sure the corn is kept watered. Don't let it dry out. Plant the corn at least 6 inches apart in the row with the rows about 10 inches apart. More space is recommended for disease and pest control. In a more controllable environment such as a container, however, the rows and plants can be sown closer together.

There are many varieties of corn with a common one being the sweet corn variety. You can even grow popcorn.

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Well, it wasn't hot enough that the popcorn would pop in the garden, but it seemed like it could. It reminded me of the time I went to Phoenix wearing 'winter' clothes and they had a hot spell. Although the Valley was supposed to have a water shortage, that must have applied to the farmers. Watering the garden only took a little more water than watering a lawn, adjusted for the high temperatures.

After a long, hot summer, we took a chance and planted cold weather crops, hoping to improve the volume of our produce. I don't care for Cole crops, period. I really like squash (winter, not summer) and we grew more than a fair amount of acorn, butternut and spaghetti. Pumpkins are also of the squash family and we canned that for pies. We planted early and had the second crop planted at least by the time we would have normally been harvesting the first crop.

I didn't mention potatoes, but we grew both kinds, sweet and regular. Since the ideal long term storage temperature for potatoes is 40°F, we had to store them in the shelter and it was still a bit on the warm side. We grew what we had and this wasn't a time when variety was considered. We used commercial seed potato and I think they were Kennebec. In the second planting, she planted Cole crops and I made her hoe them.

It was either the 1st or 2nd of September when they came. We'd taken down our vegetable stand from the empty lot to the west. The group showed up around 11pm; Derek and John had the gate while Kevin and Jason were on patrol. I heard a grenade explode. The side of the bus was covered with sandbags so if it was their grenade it peppered the sandbags and if it was our grenade, more than sandbags got peppered.

I slide into my Tac Force chest harness and motored to the gate, on high – which is slower than people who can walk, walk. However, when I got there, the problem wasn't at the entrance, it was the roving patrol.

"It was over on the east side, Dad."

"Aren't you going over there?"

"It could be a diversion; we have to stay on the gate."

I motored down the middle of Northstar Drive and when I got to the corner of Northstar and Moondance Drive, there was nothing to see. I slowed the chair to 3 dots (medium speed) and continued south on Moondance. Damon, Ron and Clarence were standing on the corner ahead, Moonraker and Moondance. (Strange names? The road into the tract is Stardust Place. Well, it is Kalifornia). Since I couldn't yell that far, I got on a radio and asked, "See anything?"

"Negatory."

That had to be Ron, our resident CB fan.

We spread out, checking backyards on the east side of the street. About 1/3 of the way down (south) Moondance, Kevin and Jason came out of a backyard.

"What was it?"

"Didn't see anything except a hole in the ground where something must have exploded."

"Did you look over the fence?"

"No one there."

Ka-boom!!!

"Westside, somewhere near Dad's house," Jason yelled.

They scooted and I shifted to high. Jason was right, the house just north of Dick's had a new hole in the backyard. Crap.

Ka-boom!!!

That one sounded like it was in the backyard of one of the corner houses at Northstar and Moondance. It could have been some homemade explosive, dyn-o-mite or hand grenades. The battery in my chair was starting to run low and I was going to just sit where I was. About the time they got there, it would go Kaboom here.

What whoever it was hadn't counted on, who knows, maybe they had, was it got everyone up and out. We had: Clarence, Ron and Gary; Chris, Matt and Dick; Jason, Dick's son-in-law and Dave; Lance, Joseph and Erica's husband; Damon, Derek and Aaron; and Eric, Coty, John and Kevin. It took all my fingers and most of my toes, we had 19 armed men and Matt's girlfriend, Dick's daughter, Erica, Dave's two daughters, Brenda and Amy. We also had, responding to a radio call, David and Jesse. (28 total)

The Hard Way – Chapter 10

Whoever it was, they were clever, they had us running around our little square housing tract. Was their plan to divide and conquer or just wear us out? I wheeled myself home and into the garage. I hung 5 magazines on each of the chairs arms and laid the cannon across my lap. Finally, I motored down to Chris's garage, unloaded and set up.

The range from where I was to the bus was ~100 yards. The bullet would barely get started before it had to stop. Also, the distance to the fence at the east end of Moonraker Road is the same distance, within a couple of feet. Nestled where I was, I could see in both locations. All anyone could see would be the barrel of the rifle, I thought. Derek told everyone to put the M16s on semi-auto to save ammo. I don't know why, we'd probably never run out.

They tried to climb over the walls, coming from all 4 directions, all at once. A thought passed through my head, "You can't shoot 'em all, pick your shot."

A young man came around the bus, tan maybe or very light black. He paused to see where to go next and I made the decision for him; direction down. All I had was ear-plugs, no cuffs, darn this rifle is loud. I saw someone come from the other end of the bus and luckily, I nailed his feet to the ground. I moved so I could aim east because there were several coming over the wall at the end of Moonraker. I thought, "A fat lot of good the claymores were, no one was there to use them."

I lined up on a fat kid and he went down. I aimed at someone pointing a rifle in my general direction. I felt a heavy hand slam into my chest, and then I must have fainted.

o

"Welcome back."

My eyes were open but I couldn't focus. My brain was confused, I knew the voice and couldn't put a name to it. I couldn't remember being this thirsty, and my mouth tasted like it was filled with chit. "Water." I knew the face and the name, but couldn't put them together. There wasn't a spot on my tired old body that didn't hurt. My God, we shouldn't have attacked the Japanese Fleet at Pearl Harbor.

"I'll bet you're glad now you decided to use the plate."

What plate, was it dinner time? "Water."

"He got you good, the plate shattered and only the vest saved your butt."

That was about the only part of my body that didn't hurt... my butt. Man, did my chest hurt.

"You got shot right in the plate and the bullet not only shattered the plate, it shoved the Kevlar in so far your sternum was separated. Here's your water."

"Where am I?"

"In the master bedroom in my house."

"Derek?"

"Dad?"

"That hurts."

"You were shot with an elephant gun."

"Darn that Ronald, he got even."

"No Dad, it was one of the attackers."

"I hate water."

"Want a beer?"

"Coffee?"

"Black?"

"No sugar."

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China's secretive transformation of its military power leaves the United States preparing for the worst eventualities, including Taiwan, a Pentagon official said Wednesday. About 900 Chinese missiles are in place opposite Taiwan, while China is also rolling out far more sophisticated long-range nuclear missiles, combat planes, warships and submarines, the Department of Defense official said.

Richard Lawless, the Pentagon's deputy undersecretary for Asia-Pacific affairs, said the US government urgently wanted to launch a strategic dialogue to discuss China's military intentions, especially over nuclear arms.

"I think if we had a true dialogue of depth... we might be able to constrain and put some of those issues of (Chinese) intent to bed," he told a hearing of the House of Representatives armed services committee.

"Not being able to, we must plan and prepare for the worst," he said. "It is an area of intense concern and we're giving it due attention from the highest levels of the Department of Defense and the inter-agency discussion."

The United States and China have long been at loggerheads over Beijing's military build-up, although US Defense Secretary Robert Gates expressed optimism about future relations at a Singapore security conference this month.

Gates called for a more detailed military dialogue with China to avoid future miscalculations, while a top Chinese general said Beijing was prepared to open a "hotline" with Washington.

Lawless alleged "a deliberate effort on the part of China's leaders to mask the nature of Chinese military capabilities," which he said could only ring precautionary alarm bells for the US and other governments.

China's successful test of an anti-satellite weapon in January could "disrupt, delay and frustrate our ability to operate" in space, he also said.

And its growing sophistication in "cyber-warfare" has given China the capacity "to attack and degrade our computer systems," he cautioned.

Lawless was briefing US lawmakers on an annual Pentagon report issued last month that questioned China's lack of transparency in its defense budgeting and suggested that it could be "planning for pre-emptive military options in advance of regional crises." Although Beijing announced an official defense budget figure of 45 billion dollars for 2007, the US Defense Intelligence Agency estimates China's total military-related spending for this year could be up to 125 billion dollars.

The lack of transparency in China's military activities "will naturally and understandably prompt international responses that hedge against the unknown," the report said. The expensive upgrading of Chinese offensive systems "is tilting the military balance in the mainland's favor" against Taiwan, but also risks upsetting the regional balance of power in Asia and beyond, Lawless said.

I deleted that file as irrelevant.

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"Watch it, that's hot."

"I need a Vicodin."

"Here, take this."

"What is it?"

"Take it."

"Not until I know what it is. Get me a Vicodin."

"Oxycontin Oral 10."

"No chit? I'll take it but it's counter indicated with my Benadryl and Xanax."

"You haven't had any of those for over a week."

"A week? Oh, yeah, I got 3."

"You got 4, including the guy with elephant gun."

"Good, that son of a gun got back what he gave."

"Worse. He was wearing a vest which slowed the Raufoss to the point that it detonated inside of him."

"No chit? I read somewhere that the current US policy (the United States has not signed the St. Petersburg Declaration) is that the ammunition is suitable for use against all targets."

"Some of the stuff you picked up at Barstow?"

"Yeah, right after the terrorist attacks."

"Have you used it before?"

"Once, to sight in the scopes."

"You didn't have a scope on the rifle last week."

"At 100-yards? You've got to be kidding."

"You took the scope off???"

"It has flip up front and rear sights that are good to 1,500 meters."

"But, you'll have to sight the scopes in again."

"Not the way I feel today, I won't, it hurts to breathe."

"Don't do that; I thought you were dead."

"Don't think so partner, this is Hotel California – you can check out but you can never leave."

I couldn't laugh at my own feeble joke, it hurt too much.

"What did you do to your blood?"

"Nothing. I took aspirin until I got an ulcer. Then, I switched to Plavix. Next, the doctor put me generic Plavix which became unavailable and I ended up just taking aspirin. Why?"

"You had a little bleeding, it was hard to stop."

"There are ACS bandages in my kit. They're QuikClot advanced clotting sponges and they should stop any bleeding. FlightERDoc recommended them."

"Did you tell anyone you had them?"

"Well..."

When the Oxy finally kicked in I stopped hurting as bad.

◦

Probably the most common cause of sternum separation is CPR. Also, the sternum is separated during open heart or coronary bypass surgery. It heals, but it can be painful. In some cases, a plate is added to support the sternum until it's healed. The NIJ standards include a maximum depth a gunshot can penetrate the vest, I think it's 44mm (1.73"). Whatever that guy had for a weapon, it crushed the ballistic plate and penetrated most of the 44mm. They told me I was excused from patrol for now. I think it tore loose on the right side, I'm not sure. If only I hadn't shifted position...

Factoid: Oxycodone is the strong pain ingredient in Percodan and Percocet. Each tablet contains 5mg of oxy plus either aspirin or acetaminophen. Bayer Company really did invent commercial aspirin, look it up. Aspirin was the first NSAID. A Frenchman discovered it 1853. The Bayer chemist who created pure aspirin, created another pain drug 11 days later – heroin. Again, someone else started it, an Englishman, then Hoffmann got his hands on it. From 1898 through to 1910 heroin was marketed as a non-addictive morphine substitute and cough medicine for children. The new opioid of choice: Oxycotin (Oxycodone). Although the term opiate is often used as a synonym for opioid, it is more properly limited to the natural opium alkaloids (morphine & codeine) and the semi-synthetics derived from them.

◦

They didn't tell me about the trip to the new hospital until later. Apparently the hospital did a CT scan or something and decided I could be treated at home. They gave Derek just enough Oxy for a few days. As far as the tract invasion went, most everyone switched to full auto and got the intruders coming over the wall or trying to get past the bus. I wasn't the only one hurt, either. We didn't lose or misplace anyone; just a few wounded.

The sounds emanating from the failed attack managed to attract attention from the LA County Sheriff's substation, the National Guard and local members of the California State Military Reserve. They were very surprised that we only had .22 rifles, shotguns, CA legal M1As and a couple of Mini-14s. Of course, they didn't look under Chris's car or in my shelter. Strangely, the attackers' guns were mostly junk and they had only 1 or 2 magazines apiece. Apparently they didn't have any spare ammo either. They had to have been desperate...

The M1 Garand fired a 30-06 round and the M1A fired 7.62x51mm. The Mini-14 and the M16 use the same cartridge, 5.56x45mm. The four dead invaders killed with the large caliber rifle had obviously been shot with Ron's .458 Winchester or the seized elephant gun. It didn't really matter how the others were shot, they didn't call in the Medical Examiner. I suppose their deaths were recorded as gunshots incurred during an attempted break in. The Deputies might have to stretch; Kali was a retreat state, before the terrorist attacks and the war.

Damn, that hurt. I decided it was worth the trip to Fresno to pick up some Dragon Skin, just in case. The Army's real objection to Dragon Skin was the price, double the price of Interceptor. By the time the wind turbines came on line, we owned the generators and a substantial amount of Jet A. Lance's friend asked why it took so much diesel and he told him we had to run the generators at full power, a little white lie. In reality, we were storing the fuel in the empty tanks of an old gas station that had been slated for demolition. We had some set aside for a rainy day.

It took about 2 months for me to get up and moving easily. Somebody told Ron about my weight set, the big ones with dumbbells ranging up to 4 pounds. I lifted weights in bed, and when I got up, they strapped them to my legs and made me walk all the way around the tract at least 4 times a day.

The second planting came in and we canned that crop. During my convalescence, someone salvaged canning materials including jars, lids and spices. It's pretty hard to make dill pickles without dill...

o

I asked myself, what does anyone with a gun look like at 100 yards? The answer came to me, a target. I still get the shakes thinking about it. We had law and order, of sorts. The local phones were back, but intermittent at best. You could dial a number, but you

never could be certain the phone would ring on the other end. The 911 system still wasn't restored.

There were both food and non-food products available in increasing quantities. The prices were, well... something else. What many fail to factor into the price of food, etc. are the transportation costs. Environmentalists would probably protest if someone brought back a steam locomotive using coal for fuel. Assuming, of course, you could find one. The introduction of diesel-electric locomotives in the first part of the 20th century spelled the end of steam locomotives, though they were used in North America and Europe to mid-century, and continued in use in other countries to the end of the century. Steam locomotives are in general simple machines, which can be maintainable under primitive conditions and consume a wide variety of fuels. By 1960 the last American holdout, the Norfolk and Western Railway, discontinued steam operations. Some US short lines continued steam operations into the 1960s, and one steel mill continued to operate steam locomotives up to 1980. Then, there was electricity.

Let the wind blow – Southern California Edison (SCE), the nation's leading purchaser of renewable energy, signed a ground-breaking wind energy contract that will provide the utility's customers with a major new source of emission-free power.

The agreement with Alta Windpower Development LLC, a subsidiary of Allco Financial Group Inc. of Australia, a global financial-services business, is the largest wind energy contract ever signed by a US utility. It secured for SCE customers 1,500 megawatts (MW) or more of power generated by new projects that were built in the Tehachapi area of California. The contract, which more than doubled SCE's wind energy portfolio, envisions more than 50 square miles of wind parks in the Tehachapi region – triple the size of any existing US wind farm. Oak Creek Energy Systems Inc. of Mojave, Calif., is a partner with Allco in the development, construction, and operations of the projects.

Coupled with other renewable energy contracts, these agreements brought to 1,889 MW the amount of environmentally sensitive power resulting from SCE's 2005 competitive renewable energy solicitation – the equivalent of two major, traditional power plants and enough generation to serve one million average homes.

SCE also signed a new contract with Chateau Energy to purchase 15 MW of power from a biomass facility in the Mesquite Lake area of Imperial County and signed an amendment to an existing contract with Edom Hill that will allow Edom's wind project to increase its capacity to 20 MW by "repowering," upgrading technology to more efficiently capture additional wind energy.

"In order to finance new, environmentally friendly power projects, developers need long-term contracts with creditworthy buyers," said Pedro Pizarro, SCE's senior vice president of power procurement. "We are pleased to play this critical role in the partnerships required to help the renewable energy industry achieve its full potential."

"It is fitting that we launched the largest wind project in the US in a state that is a renewable energy leader and with the leading utility in renewable development," said Steen Stavnsbo, head of Allco Wind Energy. "We are grateful for the positive working relationship with SCE that has made this exciting venture possible."

"We are pleased our long-term commitment to the Tehachapi area produced such a ground-breaking project," said Hal Romanowitz, president of Oak Creek Energy Systems. "This project combines the strengths of industry leaders in a way that will have great value for the people of California."

"I applaud Southern California Edison for this historic wind energy contract," said Michael R. Peevey, president of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). "This contract helped California move closer to its goal of generating 20% or more of our electricity with clean, renewable energy. Edison's achievement further highlights the importance of the work state policymakers and utilities are doing to expand the state's transmission grid so projects such as these can become a reality."

SCE's renewable portfolio, described below, could deliver more than 2,700 MW of electricity. Recent contracts added to the portfolio increased its capacity when they began to operate:

- 1,021 MW from wind
- 892 MW from geothermal
- 354 MW from solar
- 221 MW from biomass
- 128 MW from SCE-owned small hydro
- 95 MW from independently owned small hydro

Maybe not, some of those solar panels might have been taken out. I didn't know and I didn't care, as long as the lights stayed on and we didn't have to fire up the generators. After all, we didn't have THAT MUCH Jet A held in reserve. My supply of gasoline for the PowerBOSS was disappearing faster than I'd like, too. Everyone promised to replace it, *as soon as we can find some*. They did, OURS.

◦

"Did you get my chair charged up?"

"Damon put in a pair of new gel-cells."

"Good. Did you get my chair charged up?"

"According to instructions, yes."

◦

What kind of instructions did it take to charge a wheelchair? There was a little black box with a wire coming out of each end. One was a standard 3 prong electrical plug and the other plugged into the right arm of the chair. Then, you charged it until the light went from yellow to green. It didn't take a college degree. All you had to be able to do was read English.

For some time, I'd noticed that every time I asked a question that could be answered either yes or no, I get an explanation. If I wanted an explanation, I'd have asked for one. Were they assuming I was senile?

Dementia is the progressive decline in cognitive function due to damage or disease in the brain beyond what might be expected from normal aging.

Particularly affected areas may be memory, attention, language, and problem solving. Especially in the later stages of the condition, affected persons may be disoriented in time (not knowing what day of the week, day of the month, month, or even what year it is), in place (not knowing where they are), and in person (not knowing who they are).

Symptoms of dementia can be classified as either reversible or irreversible depending upon the etiology of the disease. Less than 10% of cases of dementia have been reversed. Dementia is a non-specific term encompassing many disease processes, just as fever is attributable to many etiologies.

o

"Did you figure out who attacked us?"

"Yes, some of them had identification. They were Islamists."

"Sheetheads???"

"That's right, Dad, sheetheads."

"They didn't stop after they attacked 6 cities?" I asked, incredulous.

"I believe now they just stopped to regroup."

"But the war... what about what happened with China?"

"Near as we can put together, they were as surprised as the rest of the world. However, unlike most of America, they reacted almost instantly to the news of the attack upon Taiwan. We've been picking up some interesting things on the radio. We can't understand it because it's in Arabic. That in and of itself should tell you something."

The Hard Way – Chapter 11

"Yeah, Katie bar the doors, here come the Indians."

"Close enough. A few of them must have been converts or Black Muslims."

"Jeez, what about Audrey and Udell? What effect does their being mixed race have?"

"Within the tract, none. However, we don't allow them out of the tract without an adult accompanying them."

"Good, good. Audrey is old enough to teach how to use one of those Browning Hi-Powers, but Junior isn't. Can't give one of them a gun without giving one to each."

"Udell is almost 10, Dad. I'll take him in hand and teach him and Audrey at the same time. However, I don't think I'll let them have handguns just yet, they aren't mature enough."

"Good idea, they might end up shooting each other."

"I'll start them with .22s and work up to something larger, if it's ok with you."

"Yeah, you do that. Be careful of your sister, she had a bad experience with one of my handguns and has an attitude."

I can't tell you why a song popped into my brain at that moment, one of my favorites. I can prove that the world is filled with crackpots from a comment to the song of the era it came from, *Why did I have to be born after the 70's?* That was the greatest point of American history. Everything was more kind, honest and peaceful in the world back then. As soon as time machines are invented I'm heading back then. "Peace man!"

Born after the '70s? Never heard of Vietnam or Kent State? Probably wonders who Martin Luther King was. Has a cell phone, computer, TV, 6 electronic games, and complains that his allowance is only \$25 a week. I wonder what he's doing now that most of the restaurants are closed and most people grow their own food or go hungry? He was probably one of those punks we shot coming over the wall, don't that beat all?

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Following the Summer of Love: In the critical year, 1968, as the atmosphere of threats, distrust, and violence poisoned the nation's politics and public life, the two leaders who might have been able to make a difference died at the hands of assassins. On 4April68, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was slain in Memphis, Tennessee, where he had gone to lend his support to striking garbage-workers. Two months later, Senator Robert F. Kennedy was murdered just as he won the California primary for the Democratic presidential nomination. Controversial and polarizing in life, both men, as martyrs,

became the focus of nearly universal mourning. The blows their murders dealt to the national psyche were catastrophic, and were only exacerbated by the urban violence that accompanied both major parties' political conventions that August.

The election, in a dispiriting and quarrelsome contest, of Republican Richard Nixon seemed to some to mark an end to the 1960s – in large part because Nixon, as Eisenhower's Vice President, presented himself as a return to the "traditional" values and politics of the 1950s. (Walter Lippmann, the veteran political commentator, declared that he would vote for Nixon because the future seemed likely to require a politics of repression, and Nixon was the most suitable candidate to preside over repression.) Yet Nixon's Presidency turned out to be almost a fitting coda to the fractious, divisive, and frenetic Sixties. The President who pledged to end the Vietnam Conflict (much as Eisenhower had won his election by pledging an end to the Korean Conflict) expanded the war to include air operations of questionable legality in Laos and Cambodia. The President who pledged *to bring us together* was so concerned about domestic subversion that he used federal intelligence agencies to spy on and harass critics of his policies. And the President who pledged a "law and order" administration was, finally, driven from office because of his and his aides' flagrant violations of the Constitution and federal law.

If any single event confirmed the American people's growing belief that they could not trust their government, it was the Watergate scandal of 1972-1974 that began as a comic opera and ended in tragedy and crisis. Watergate dramatized the risks of the postwar Presidency in ways that the American people could not escape. In the wake of Franklin D. Roosevelt, and of the vesting of the power to use nuclear and thermonuclear weapons within the discretion of the President, the American people tended to defer to presidential power, to presidential claims of expansive and inherent executive authority, and to presidential judgments as to what foreign and defense ("national security") policies would best serve the national interest. The Watergate crisis showed how a President could camouflage massive and flagrant illegality behind the label of national security, and how difficult it was to mount a successful challenge to such claims.

Remember: *Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.*

o

I only pointed that out because the war didn't involve Russia and we still had plenty of nuclear weapons. I suppose, in time, things will wear out and we may not be able to replace them. I'm thinking that I like Obama's approach, sort of *laissez-faire*, an injunction against government interference with the recovery effort. It's actually an economic term: The basic idea is that less government interference in private economic decisions such as pricing, production, consumption, and distribution of goods and services makes for a better (more efficient) economy.

Which would be fine if our economy was normal; it wasn't. Still, not having resettlement camps, like they did after Katrina, was nice. That's what they did, without the armed

guards, think about it. Most fiction of this genre includes FEMA camps or something like that. I concluded that if FEMA couldn't find New Orleans, we were safe; Kalifornia is further from Washington.

On the issue of Kalifornia's firearm laws, what good is a law that prevents you from protecting your family and yourself? The lawmakers seemed to assume that LA employed 109,000 cops, not 9,000. (There were more gang members in LA than there were cops.)

What did he say about broadcasts in Arabic? I'd better try and do a lap; they could come back. If you were a shethead, and, when you tried to take on our housing tract and the only members of your party who survived were those who ran away, would you come back? All that does is put them off and paint a target on your fence. We'd given up half of our heavy military weapons in exchange for a free supply of fuel. In hind sight, maybe it wasn't the best plan. At the time, we needed electricity more than machine guns.

Maybe later, the next strike against a small housing tract was on the Westside and those folks were obedient citizens, hence dead. Over the course of the next few months, 'they' hit several small tracts but didn't come back here. I don't trust people who can't tell a sheet from a hat. I also knew they'd be back (it's my story). The only work available was LA Cleanup. They sent school buses around the valley picking up volunteers. Nobody here volunteered, a new planting was in, we'd already been attacked once, plus there was the residual radiation from the terrorist bomb.

Chris found day work repairing cars; Dick and Dave's mortgage companies were in LA, reducing their payments (to zero) and Lance, Ron, Clarence and I were retired. Damon had some kind of side business having something to do with salvage and Derek was now in charge of tract security. We didn't worry about sending the children to school, they could learn more at home in a morning than at school in a week. I taught one class, History. I could have taught Economics: always get your home loan from a company in a bomb zone.

This time we planted dry beans, chili peppers, green peppers, tomatoes, potatoes, cucumbers and some of the salad crops. We didn't try to grow rice because it was available in the stores in 50# and 100# bags. The same went for wheat; flour seemed to be abundant although there wasn't much baked bread. Just what the stores baked, usually French bread. We didn't plant corn either, too little yield for the space it took. We could buy dry corn by the bushel and grind our own corn meal. (Hard flour, or "bread" flour, is high in gluten and so forms a certain toughness that holds its shape well once baked.) As long as we had toilet paper and the stools flushed, it wasn't really what one would call a hard life.

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Nowhere in the world is rice production more advanced than in California. Careful attention to every step in the cropping cycle and milling ensures that rice produced in our

warm Mediterranean climate meets—and often exceeds—customers’ expectations for great rice.

In March, farmers begin to prepare their fields for planting. First, fields are carefully leveled with precision, laser-guided grading equipment. Flat fields allow rice farmers to conserve water. Fertilizer is then added, and shallow furrows are rolled into the field. By April, the fields are ready to be planted.

Water is run into the fields to a depth of only 5 inches. Consistent water depth has been shown to improve the rice plants’ ability to compete against weeds for nutrients and sunlight, reducing the need for herbicides. Rice seed is then soaked and loaded into planes. Flying at 100 mph, planes plant the fields from the air. The heavy seeds sink into the furrows and begin to grow.

The rice seedlings are now ready to begin their four to five-month journey to maturity. Early in the growing cycle, one to two applications of herbicides are applied to control weeds. If necessary, farmers may also treat the fields for the rice water weevil and other insects. Early application of just a few crop protection materials ensures pure rice at harvest.

The rice grows rapidly, ultimately reaching a height of 3 feet. During this time, farmers are careful to maintain a consistent water depth of the same 5 inches. By late summer, the grain begins to appear in long panicles on the top of the plant. By September, the grain heads are mature and ready to be harvested. On average, each acre will yield over 8,000 pounds of rice.

Before rice harvest can begin, the fields must be drained. Once the fields are dry, state-of-the-art harvesters enter the fields to collect the perfectly ripe grain. Because quality is so important, these harvesters are designed to both gently and rapidly bring the grain in from the fields. Specialized tractors called bankout wagons come alongside, receiving the rice and delivering it to waiting trailers so the harvesters can continue without having to stop to unload.

Next, the rice is carefully dried to an ideal moisture level and stored until the customer places an order. At the mill, the hull is first removed, leaving brown rice. White rice is the result of gently removing the bran layers to leave just the inner, pearly grain. Rice mills in California are among the most advanced in the world, with specialized equipment to mill, sort and package rice to meet the highest quality standards.

California specialty rice varieties range from Arborio, Jasmine, Basmati, Calmochi and colored rices like Black and Mahogany Japonica and Red Rice. Small quantities of these varieties are grown in the Sacramento Valley that provides crystal clean water from the Sierras and a Mediterranean climate of warm days and cool nights. So if you crave a little adventure or want to refresh your menu, try our specialty rices.

About 7% of the rice grown in California consists of short grain varieties. Below are the primary varieties and best uses by type of rice. These super-premium varieties were developed from Japanese lines and are grown in the Sacramento Valley. The firm, sticky grains are the preferred consistency for most traditional Japanese favorites. Home sushi makers may prefer this rice if making sushi rice prior to serving because it retains its moisture for longer periods.

More than 90 percent of the rice grown in California consists of medium grain variety. Calrose and "New Variety" are grown in the Sacramento Valley. After the crop is harvested, others use the rice lands for habitat; all kinds of critters.

Makes sense, there are wind farms in the San Francisco area, to the east-southeast – Altamont Wind Pass. The only one I haven't mentioned is the San Geronio Wind Pass near Palm Springs. None of this takes anything away from the biggest one in the world, Tehachapi.

The Rice Belt is located in four southern states of the US includes Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. These four states grow a significant portion of the nation's rice crop. The name is in conformity with the Corn Belt of the Midwest, in which much of the nation's corn is grown. Arkansas is the nation's leading rice producer, followed by California, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, and Missouri. In the US, colonial South Carolina and Georgia grew and amassed great wealth from the slave labor obtained from the Senegambia area of West Africa. It wasn't economically viable after the Civil War. The predominant strain of rice in the Carolinas was from Africa and was known as "Carolina Gold." The cultivar had been preserved and there were current attempts to reintroduce it as a commercially grown crop. The total US rice crop runs about 14 million tons and before the war, we were an exporter.

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"Is there any pattern to the locations they're hitting?"

"Not that we can tell, no."

"Are they hitting and looting or what?"

"They're taking the food, but not much else. They're primary reason seems to be to kill people."

"Do the cops know who?"

"No, they've been removing their bodies, if any of their people get killed. Either that or none of their people are getting killed."

"Are they just hitting small tracts?"

"Yes, about the size of this tract. One would think someone would report gunfire and contact law enforcement. However, Lance says that the Sheriff's Department reports that nobody heard anything."

"Improved flashhiders?"

"Could be, Dad. I hear most of the victims had their throats cut."

You didn't forget that Chris installed 2 road plates in my office did you? Good, because if this happened again, I wasn't leaving the house. I'd wear the Dragon Skin I'd picked up on our trip to Fresno and shoot from behind the 1" thick plates. My boys could help move my desk when they weren't busy, bolt the plates to the wall and install pintle mounts for each of the two windows. I'd shoot my TAC-50 from there. I'm not gun shy; more like bullet shy.

I thought about praying they'd hit somewhere else and not come back here. We were better prepared than most areas and a prayer like that would be nothing, if not selfish. The only other thing that came to me was getting more people to move in creating safety in numbers. With about two-thirds of the homes empty, we could triple our security force if we could find occupants willing to fight to keep a home.

We had the 6 A3s, half of our previous heavy weapons (actually crew-served weapons) and some of us, including me, would be willing to give up their A3 if the need arose. We still had all 36 A4s. I only had one because of the M203 and the boxes of 40mm grenades were still sealed. I didn't much care for Poodles, but didn't plan on shooting any. We had to overcome the problem that led to us not using the Claymores the last time; no one had X-Ray vision and couldn't see through the wall. We needed peep holes to know when to fire them and a central observer or two to know where to send someone to look and use the firing device.

The best teacher in the world is the mistakes you survived that could have gotten you killed or injured. They teach you the meaning of, *There but for the Grace of God Go I*. Some of us are familiar with the expression because it describes our recovery. Many permanent AA locations have just such a sign. I am and I don't, 'nuff said. Don't be moving around in a firefight exposing yourself to the other guy, you might get hurt.

I heard that LAPD had a broken Barrett rifle and Ronnie wouldn't service it. "Please excuse my slow response on the repair service of the rifle. I am battling to see what service I am repairing the rifle for. I will not sell, nor service, my rifles to those seeking to infringe upon the Constitution and the crystal clear rights it affords individuals to own firearms."

Old news, I know, but LAPD is so cheap, they probably still have the broken rifle and magazines. They still had that miserable excuse for a human being, Bratton. He was a politically correct cop right up to when the terrorist bomb went off, 3 blocks from Parker

Center. Bratton was from Boston, which should explain him reasonably well. Anyone Ronnie didn't like must not be worth much, right?

The BGs had taken a different approach, attacking in the wee hours instead of broad daylight. Ron and Clarence wanted to stake out some neighborhoods and try to catch the guys – no sale, Lance couldn't get an exception to the dusk to dawn curfew. We had been assured that the curfew would be eliminated once that tract invasions stopped. The curfew, which had been put in place about the time we left the shelter the second time, had done nothing to prevent the nighttime attacks once they began.

Lance and Derek took necessary steps to correct the deficiencies that got me shot during the attack. Among the original residents still present and their families, there was little disagreement beyond correcting the shortcomings. To minimize risk, we caravanned to Costco, Sam's Club and Wal-Mart with an occasional detour to Smart and Final. When they went, they usually left me in charge of security.

A platform/security post had been constructed and set atop Dave's 2-story house. We had younger people staffing it during the day. Their only responsibility was to tell us if people carrying firearms approached the tract. Nighttime duties fell to a pair of adults equipped with night vision and firearms. Once implemented, we planned to continue the program indefinitely.

◦

Chesapeake has 9 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of proven gas reserves. That sounds like a lot, but US demand for natural gas has outstripped domestic production since 1985, forcing us to import the difference, largely from less than friendly countries and in competition with other nations. Substituting gas for coal-fired electricity would exacerbate these problems.

Geologists say the US Outer Continental Shelf could contain 420 Tcf – enough to meet current demand for 15 years. But over 85% of these areas are off limits to drilling. On-shore gas resources face similar obstacles. And eco purists want to keep it that way. Electricity provides 40% of the energy we use, and the United States will need 100,000 megawatts of new electricity by 2020, according to analysts. Conservation and efficiency programs would reduce demand somewhat. But growth in population and technologies that use electricity mean we will need every available source: gas, nuclear, hydroelectric, wind, biofuels, waste-to-energy – and coal. Right now, coal generates half of our electricity, and there are no viable alternatives in the near term.

The ads and environmental group websites say coal-fired power plants are responsible for scary-sounding amounts of air pollution. The facts tell a different story.

Between 1970 and 2004, the US population grew by 40% ... its Gross Domestic Product by 187% ... miles traveled by 171% ... electricity consumption by 115% ... and coal burning by 80 percent. And yet, during this period, aggregate air pollution was cut in

half, thanks to improved efficiency and pollution control, air quality expert Joel Schwartz points out. New rules require large additional reductions over the coming years that will eliminate most remaining power plant emissions by 2017.

Coal-fired power plants are now the primary source of US mercury emissions, not because their emissions are large, but because the real sources (incinerating wastes and processing ores containing mercury) have been eliminated. America now accounts for only 2% of global mercury emissions, and new EPA rules require a further 70% reduction from power plants over the next decade, Schwartz says.

Total air pollution now poses no significant health risks, even for children. (Asthma rates have risen as air pollution fell, so pollution cannot be a factor.) Moreover, coal-generated electricity costs much less per kilowatt hour than alternatives – leaving families with more money for nutrition and healthcare.

I guess they've got gas... The problem was that California, for one, wouldn't allow retrieval of any of its gas reserves. Platforms off the coast wouldn't LOOK pretty. If they had their way, environmentalists would protect us out of existence.

o

I'll say one thing: if you look hard enough you can always find the silver lining in any cloud. Between the terrorist attacks and the war, petroleum demands dropped; so did the production and when you could get gas, it went for \$10 a gallon. That made it awfully expensive for them to replace the gas they borrowed.

The conspiracy theorists would have you believe that Dubya brought down the WTC. Apparently they're not engineers because engineers already explained how the heat from all that jet fuel and the stripped insulation caused the girders to flex which dropped one floor and caused a cascading failure. It was easier to believe that Lyndon was behind the assassination of Jack Kennedy. Every time we had a slow news day, you'd hear another theory. Maybe they should pay attention to the real problems we had trying to clean up 6 cities and the places the warheads hit.

Obama had his work cut out for him just trying to keep the country together without being blamed for the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City. Never mind they executed McVeigh and Nichols is in prison forever... at Florence no less. We were too worried we might be attacked again in the wee hours to be very concerned about crap like that. It, nevertheless, ate at my innards. I wanted to scream, "Get a Life!" However, I'm sure the first amendment only applies to those nuts, not this nut.

[rant] I'd taken great steps to avoid telling you how my DW really felt about being prepared. Some things she'll go along with because it 'sorta made sense'. That was having extra food and essentials stored. When it came to items for home protection and the hole in the ground, she was less enthused. She'd rather spend \$2,000 on replacing some door than spending a little more protecting our lives. It

was just darned hard getting the things I wanted and it happened despite her.
[/rant]

I took apart the cable on my wheelchair charger only to discover that the third wire I thought was broken hadn't been connected to begin with. I repaired the wire the dog chewed and had a spare charger. I used the spare charger to charge the batteries and learned that I hadn't left the charger on long enough and if I did, they'd still hold a charge. It's nice to have options...

I didn't get the night watch because I wouldn't climb the ladder up to the observation post. Lucky me because late one night, they finally came. Chris had the duty and was on the radio when they were still a fair distance off. People responded with a sense of urgency and he was able to warn them when he thought the invaders were getting close enough to warrant the use of the Claymores. Not very liberal thinking of him; this, I could get used to. Bottom line, the mines worked as advertised forcing the few remaining invaders to turn tail and boogie. Of course, by that time, some of us had made it to the wall and peering over decided it was perfectly acceptable to shoot people in the backs, only cops have to be politically correct.

Not that the cops agreed when they showed up, but that's a different story. There are times when I truly believe that cops don't always want to be politically correct. This leads to vision problems (called by some, a blind eye). The thing about Full Metal Jacket ammo is that the exit wound is about the size of the entrance wound and if one doesn't look close enough... Another thing, in the excitement of the moment, I forgot that I was going to stay in my office and shoot from behind the road plates while wearing my new Dragon Skin. It's one thing to make plans and quite another thing when TSHTF. Heck, I grabbed my M1A and vest and was almost to the wall before I remembered what I had planned to do.

It seems likely this bunch of sheetheads who attacked this time was either the ones attacking the other tracts or somehow connected to them. I can only assert that because after this attack, no more housing tracts were invaded. It was nice of the Deputies to have the acute vision problems too. Most unlike typical law enforcement behavior in the Peoples Republik of Kalifornia.

"How many did we get?"

"I didn't get a body count, Ron, enough, we can hope."

"Gar-ree, will this be the last of it?"

"I don't know, Clarence, only time will tell."

o

As I mentioned, it turned out that it was. Since I don't shoot competition, the only times after that that I shot the Tac-50 were the few times we took it to the range to confirm I hadn't jostled the scope out of alignment. Fortunately, I had some .50BMG that duplicated the Raufoss rounds ballistics (M1022) permitting me to only use one Mk 211MP with each of the scopes to verify that the Tac-50 was sighted in. I did manage to acquire some of that 750gr Hornady A-MAX match ammo... woohoo! Let me tell you right here and now, that some good stuff!

For those who wanted to install a red dot on their M1A, a SWAT officer recommended the A.R.M.S. 22TX30 mount with the Burris 300205 XTS-135 1X - 30mm Tube Matte Xtreme Tactical SpeedDot sight. I know what he recommended because he wrote it down and I taped inside the front cover of my TM 9-1005-223-12 M14 tech manual.

It would boil down to: Would you rather have the weapons systems and not need them, or need them and not have them? From that point forward, we never again found it necessary to defend the housing tract against Islamists. In time, Clarence moved back to Birmingham to be nearer to his family and Ron and I stayed in Palmdale.

I suppose it was a permanent thing, my just in case mode. We never allowed our stock of foods to fall below a one year supply, with extras. I adopted that concept from the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints. One never knew when the next storm, earthquake or volcanic eruption would occur. Most of the natural disasters likely to affect our lives were overdue.

As originally written, the story ended here. It must be my senility, I forgot that bad things happen in threes. There were two looming possibilities, a real 3rd world war or a natural disaster. I'd posed the question as to whether a nuclear exchange between 2 countries constituted a GTW. It was a Thermonuclear War, for sure; it involved 2 continents, but only 2 countries, making the global part of it suspect. It would take some analysis to determine whether the nuclear exchange between the US and China constituted a Global Thermonuclear War, aka WW III.

It would seem that, WW III would have to happen between the US and Russia, the only two large nuclear powers on the planet.

The possibility of using nuclear weapons in war is usually divided into two subgroups, each with different effects and potentially fought with different types of nuclear armaments.

The first, a limited nuclear war, consists of only the use of a small number of weapons in a strategic exchange aimed primarily at the opposing military forces. The effects of the weapons would still affect civilian locations. Many military bases are located near cities and nuclear fallout would be spread widely through the atmosphere.

Various nations developed relatively low-yield tactical nuclear weapons during the Cold War for use in such situations, though the explosive power of such weapons still vastly exceeds those of conventional (non-nuclear) arms.

The second, a full-scale nuclear war, consists of large numbers of weapons used in an attack aimed at an entire country, including both military and civilian targets. Such an attack would seek to destroy the entire economic, social, and military infrastructure of a nation by means of an overwhelming nuclear attack.

Some Cold War strategists argued that a limited nuclear war could be possible between two heavily-armed superpowers and if so several predicted that a limited war could escalate into an all-out war.

A third category, not usually included with the above two, is accidental nuclear war, in which a nuclear war is triggered unintentionally. Possible scenarios for this have included malfunctioning early warning devices and targeting computers, deliberate malfeasance by rogue military commanders, accidental straying of planes into enemy airspace, reactions to unannounced missile tests during tense diplomatic periods, reactions to military exercises, mistranslated or miscommunication of messages, and so forth. A number of these scenarios did actually occur during the Cold War, though none resulted in a nuclear exchange.

BTW, Wiki is located in Tampa, Florida. The definitions from the reestablished Wiki didn't help because no one disputed that it was a full scale nuclear war. Considering the outcome, however, made one realized how one-sided it had been. We took hits; they got (almost) wiped out. We could rebuild, there were few over there left to rebuild. If you could say one thing good about the war, it was that we finally had a more reasonable number of nuclear weapons. That's a laugh, our remaining weapons were enough to wipe out most of the rest of the world.

Consider, if you will, the fact that we still had 20 B-2 Spirits, 18 capable of delivering 16 B83s, one of the most modern nuclear weapons in the stockpile. ($16 \times 18 = 288$) It should be noted that since the target country couldn't identify the delivery system or even see the bombs until they started to fall, we'd automatically be guilty of delivering them – no one else, that we know of, had B-2 Stealth Bombers. With that in mind, remember, we developed our first stealth aircraft based on information provided by a Russian. Wiki says, "Stealth aircraft allow raids on important point targets to occur, while maintaining a cover of plausible denial. Since no-one could detect the attackers or at least identify them, the stealth operator would simply refuse to comment and hope to avoid war.

Both Australia and Russia have announced that they have developed processing techniques that allow them to detect the turbulence of aircraft at reasonably long ranges (possibly negating the stealth technology). We all know where they got the idea, Star Trek. Captain James T. Kirk figured that out to identify cloaked Klingon (Romulan) battle cruisers. Another character I liked detected F-117 Nighthawks in a movie, Travis Dane in Under Siege II, using wake turbulence.

The Hard Way – Chapter 12

In 1966 a well-known Soviet mathematician, Pyotr Ufimtsev, published a paper ("Method of Edge Waves in the Physical Theory of Diffraction") in which he described mathematical methods to predict RCS of two-dimensional objects. Ufimtsev's work was directly used by Lockheed's mathematician, Denys Overholser, to develop computer software known as "Echo 1", which could calculate the RCS of an aircraft constructed of flat panels. This program was used to find the optimum geometry to minimize an aircraft's RCS. The resulting structure became known as Have Blue aka "Hopeless Diamond", which lies in the basis of F-117A's external construction. Simply put, the flat, angled external panels of F-117A are designed to reflect radar waves in all directions but the direction of the radar's receiving antenna. This means that to effectively track F-117A one would have to use multiple radars (or, at least, multiple receivers.) Needless to say that the geometrical requirements for minimizing the RCS established by "Echo 1" program had little place for considerations of aerodynamics. The resulting aircraft had the aerodynamics of a flying coffin.

After we built it, we kept it a secret for 11 years. By then, newer, more powerful computers were available, allowing us to develop the B-2 Spirit, adapting Jack Northrop's old design. One final note on stealth aircraft, they're aerodynamically unstable on all 3 axes and require constant flight corrections from the fly-by-wire system to stay airborne. If we can build one, I assume the Russian's can figure it out. If they built one, and kept it totally secret, we could get blamed for things they did. Think about that... they're better at keeping secrets because they have a handle on the media and their 'Congress' (State Duma & Federation Council).

o

It has been alleged, in the movies, that a scientist could examine a nuclear detonation and determine who built the weapon. I'll put that in the category of, 'if they say so'. I don't know and can assure you, I don't care. If that's indeed the case, one would assume that the Russians couldn't do what I just suggested. However, it also assumes that someone would take the time to discover who bombed them. Need I remind you of all the hot heads out there?

Having seen the destruction of China, and realizing that the US had more weapons left than it used, I speculate that the Russians decided it wasn't worth it. The world was in a terrible state once the American economy collapsed (right after the Chinese economy collapsed). Putin once claimed that their society was more Democratic than ours. We export Democracy, BUT, we're a Representative Republic. Don't believe anything the late "Chappaquiddick Ted" Kennedy said... If you know your history, Rome was once a Representative Republic (~500 years) that later became a Democracy (~250 years).

The Russians aren't as dumb as some think:

The Russian government is making efforts to regain control of its energy resources. Last week, BP's Russian subsidiary, TNK-BP, sold the rich Kovykta gas deposit in the Irkutsk Region in Eastern Siberia, one of the largest in the world, to Russia's Gazprom. Foreign investors are taking the news with reserved optimism, because the Kovykta license could have been revoked without any compensation and the Russian officials had grounds for doing so.

However, the package eventually signed between Russia's gas monopoly and the British oil and gas giant shows that the Russian government still wants to retain foreign investors in this country, and is even offering stakes in large joint projects outside Russia.

On June 22, TNK-BP agreed to sell its 63% controlling stake in the Kovykta gas condensate deposit to Gazprom. The deal was reached at a meeting in the Kremlin attended by First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, who is also chairman of Gazprom's board.

The amount of the deal has not been disclosed, but preliminary estimates suggest it was somewhere in the range of \$600 million-\$900 million. As is well known, the Russian-British joint venture had invested \$405 million in the project, so it even got a good deal by selling it.

TNK-BP must certainly have expected much higher revenues when it took control of Kovykta in 2003. The deposit's reserves are estimated at 2 trillion cubic meters of natural gas, 2.3 billion cubic meters of helium and 115 million metric tons of gas condensate. But the joint venture was denied access to the Russian pipeline system, wholly owned by Gazprom, and therefore could not market the gas in Russia or abroad. All it could do was sell negligible amounts of gas locally, in the Irkutsk Region.

TNK-BP was perfectly aware that the project would never work properly without Gazprom's participation and invited the gas giant to come on board on multiple occasions. It even offered the gas giant a controlling stake in Kovykta earlier this year. Gazprom kept silent.

In June, TNK-BP's troubles reached a critical point. Russian officials could have revoked the Kovykta license any day because the joint venture had failed to observe the conditions of the license agreement, that is, to boost production to 9 billion cubic meters a year.

It was only then that Gazprom came to the "rescue" by buying TNK-BP's whole stake in Kovykta on its own terms. The government lifted the license violation charges in no time; even though it was due to make the final decision on June 22. Russia's Natural Resources Ministry even said it could adjust the conditions of the license agreement and expected Gazprom to submit development proposals.

All this is reminiscent of another Gazprom story, the one involving Royal Dutch Shell and Sakhalin II. The British-Dutch company had long been inviting Gazprom to cooper-

ate in the Sakhalin II liquefied natural gas project until it was forced to sell its controlling stake to the gas giant on the latter's terms. Otherwise, it could have lost the license because of charges of environmental violations brought by Russia's Nature Ministry. In the end, Shell remained a major shareholder in Sakhalin II, while the environmental charges were shelved soon afterwards.

In the Kovykta case, foreign investors found this similarity comforting in a way, because the rules of the game were clear. Moreover, Russian officials must have been making efforts to preserve good relations with BP, which owns 50% of its Russian subsidiary, all along. The agreement reached in the Kremlin on June 22 offered BP or TNK-BP a chance to buy into the project again, acquiring a blocking stake of 25% plus one share. This clause must have pleased foreign investors the most.

It is also evidence of the Kremlin's awareness that Russia will be unable to preserve its high economic growth rate without large transnational investments.

On the other hand, the option to buy a stake in Kovykta comes with a major proviso. It will only come into effect after BP, TNK-BP and Gazprom set up a strategic alliance to implement \$3 billion worth of projects and exchange assets in Russia and abroad. No specific projects have been mentioned.

Gazprom obviously wants to use its foreign partners and the Russian government's support to gain access to badly needed new resources and to new foreign markets. The Russian gas monopoly is interested in energy assets in Europe and Asia. It long ago entered the British gas market and wants to boost its share. It has been eyeing British gas distribution networks for a while now.

This clause of the agreement has been approved by the West. The European Commission commended the Gazprom-BP strategic alliance, which would contribute to the EU's "energy security," EU officials said. This response is especially welcome at Gazprom, because Europe is generally wary of Russian investments.

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"LVO says they have increased seismic activity," Ron called to say.

"It's a long way from Long Valley to Palmdale Ron. Shoot any grizzly bears lately?"

"Hey asshole, this could be important; why are you ragging my butt over my .458 Winchester?"

"Because I can? I been there, you know; I shot Bambi up near Conway Summit."

"Did you know that you were there at the time?"

"Heck no, I didn't learn that for 40 years or more. Drove right by Mono Lake in the dark. I've studied all about Long Valley though; I don't believe it will explode anytime soon. They established the observatory in '82 because they had seismic activity back then."

o

Factoid: The most intense of these swarms began in May 1980 and included four strong magnitude 6 shocks, three of which struck on the same day. Immediately following these shocks, scientists from the US Geological Survey (USGS) began a reexamination of the Long Valley area and detected other evidence of unrest – a dome-like uplift in the caldera. Their measurements showed that the center of the caldera had risen almost a foot since the summer of 1979, after decades of stability. This continuing swelling, which by early 2000 totaled nearly 2.5 feet and affects more than 100 square miles, is caused by new magma rising beneath the caldera.

During the early 1990's, trees began dying off at several places on Mammoth Mountain on the southwest edge of Long Valley Caldera. Studies conducted by USGS and US Forest Service scientists show that the trees are being killed by large amounts of carbon dioxide gas seeping up through the soil from magma deep beneath Mammoth Mountain. Such emissions of volcanic gas, as well as earthquake swarms and ground swelling, commonly precede volcanic eruptions. When these events precede an eruption of a "central vent" volcano, such as Mount St. Helens, Washington, they normally last only a few weeks or months. However, such symptoms of volcanic unrest may persist for decades or even centuries at large calderas, such as Long Valley Caldera. Recent studies indicate that only about one in six such episodes of unrest at large calderas worldwide actually culminates in an eruption.

It even has a number: 120314-A. Historically, they've had ~23 explosive eruptions. In an earlier story I said we had 10 calderas in the US. We actually have 22.

o

"Are you saying there's nothing to worry about?"

"Not at all, I worry about everything. Have you heard anything about Yellowstone?"

"No, why?"

"It's the largest and most active caldera in the lower 48. There are 6 in Alaska and another 5 in Hawaii. You can look it up on Wiki, if you want to."

"I watched *Supervolcano* when it first came out Gar-Bear, that guy from the USGS said the possibility of an eruption was remote."

"About 1 chance in 20,000 on a daily basis; I saw the show too, Ron." (The mixed exponential probability of an intracaldera rhyolitic lava eruption in the next year, ~72 ka after the

last eruption, is equivalent to an annual rate of 5×10^{-5} or a recurrence rate of 1 in 20,000 years.)"

◦

I can hear the groans now, "Yellowstone, again?" Maybe, maybe not. Long Valley is swarming according to Ron, I'm just reviewing possibilities. While a smaller event than a Supervolcano, e.g., a hurricane, tornado, cyclone, forest fire, earthquake, landslide or flood occurs more often, they lack the impact of a Supervolcano. Neither you nor I will know until I type it. We're in Palmdale, you can eliminate the hurricane and tornado. Most Pacific cyclones (typhoons) don't make it to the west coast so you might as well eliminate those too. That leaves forest fire (multiple, every year), earthquake (a large one about every 10 years, a major rupture on the San Andreas ~150 years), landslide (no data) and a caldera forming eruption (1 every ~600,000 years). After a major terrorist attack and a 'small' nuclear war, a natural disaster is a higher probability.

Affect vs. Effect (Resolving the common confusion)

"Affect" is usually a verb meaning "to influence". – The drug did not affect the disease.

"Effect" is usually a noun meaning "result". – The drug has many adverse side effects.

"Effect" can also be used as a verb meaning "to bring about". – The present government effected many positive changes.

◦

"Fine, which one, Long Valley or Yellowstone?"

"It won't matter, neither should affect us directly. With the prevailing winds, the ash should go east and the most significant effects would be a reduction of our food supply and the difficulty of transportation."

"Anything else you have concerns about?"

"Sure, the Cascade Range volcanoes, the San Andreas Fault, any gangsters or troublemakers they've overlooked, rattlesnakes, problems finding cigarettes, running low on ammo, not being..."

"Enough, already. Why would you be concerned about things you don't have any control over?"

"Who says we don't have any control over some of those things? I'm not worried about rattlesnakes, cigarettes or ammo. The jury is out on Folgers coffee."

"How much coffee do you have?"

"Not much, 38 57oz cans."

"You can't be short of smokes. Not after that trip east."

"Yes and no. I'm down to 18 cartons of the Super Kings. Then I'll have to switch to the Kings, and I don't like them because I smoke too many."

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All that and my real concern never surfaced, the economy. Gas, when you could get it, was down around \$7.50-\$8.00. We had less than a one year supply of Jet A stored to run our generators and most ammo was limited to the stock we had on hand. The Jet A could be substituted for #2 diesel, when necessary. Utilities had eventually been restored and we learned in the process how fragile our infrastructure really was.

The only problem the attacks and the war appeared to solve was our problem with illegal immigrants, many of the Hispanics went home. Obama (the President, remember), had more important things on his plate than illegal immigrants. There could still be terrorists although not as likely as before. Plus we now had extra Beano for the next time. Rite Aid was starting to have DAK hams, Spam, Dinty Moore products and canned corned beef. My supplies of meds were back up and both Sharon and I were sitting on about 9 months' worth.

Damon and Derek left to go back to Iowa and Arkansas, respectively, when Lance said we didn't really need 24/7 security. Iowa doesn't like NFA firearms and Damon could only take the 870 and M9. Derek wasn't as restricted and took a large assortment, including several items that technically belonged on the National Firearms Registry.

Sharon got an attorney and he filed the necessary paperwork to get clear title to our home. He told her it could take as long as a year before we had it and recommended we resume making the payments into an escrow account. She also got Mark to prepare our taxes and filed them by mail, sending them to the usual addresses, Fresno and Sacramento. We had enough casualty losses that it didn't appear we owed much so she didn't send in checks. They could bill us she said (she didn't think they would).

When Derek got back to Flippin, he called to say he'd been activated to aid in the recovery effort. Mary got her old job of driving school buses back and they were more than making ends meet. Damon had a large accumulation being held by his representative payee.

As long as Sharon and I had gotten into gardening, we continued as our way of making ends meet. Chris kept the mechanics job because downtown Hollywood no longer held the Paramount Studio and ET had been cancelled. Dave retired. Dick returned to work for So Cal Gas and was principally involved in repair work rather than new installations, until they were ready to start rebuilding.

Ron and I started to go to *A Place to Shoot* every Friday afternoon in an effort to improve our marksmanship. He drove and I supplied the gas. I added the A.R.M.S.

22TX30 mount with the Burris 300205 XTS-135 1X - 30mm Tube Matte Xtreme Tactical SpeedDot sight to both of my M1As. Lance occasionally went to the range with us and added the SpeedDot sight to his M16A3.

By now, I'd burned through my surplus ammo and was using the Black Hills 168gr hollow point match full time. I picked up a pair of 5 round magazines in case we decided to go hunting (not likely).

We had more than one task that the city of Palmdale mandated: removing and storing the concertina (they didn't know about the Claymores); replacing the fences between the properties; and, getting our standby electrical systems certified. Only Dave was able to help and then, only part time. To say that 2011 was a busy year was an understatement. I had a different shed (larger) erected to store the wire. Sharon, Patti, Amy and I nearly emptied the garage and installed more shelving (8 sections) to hold our increasing food supplies.

During that year, we lost Missy, Pyewacket and Shadow due to old age, reducing our supply of pets to 5, 2 cats and 3 dogs. The additional labor saw both Sharon and I in an improved state of health. She decided she wanted a portion of the back patio enclosed. She found a contractor and he was able to use some existing material, cutting the cost by half. The only part she enclosed was the part under the roof.

o

The Mexicans might have gone home while the radiation was a threat; however, they didn't stay. It appeared that we not only got the ones that left, back – they brought several relatives. They were angry when Amnesty failed and apparently planned to get even. With the US in the mess it was, most found it impossible to live off the dole. Plus, the government didn't have time or money to build a great big wall, plant mines or dig trenches.

They considered The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to be meaningless although the US paid some cash for the territories we gained. It was evident where the average American stood on the issue, we didn't want them. When they realized they couldn't resettle Los Angeles, they move east, north and west. Some of the former residents returned, ownership papers in hand, and they were able to reclaim their homes. It was a *The Life of Reilly* moment ("What a revoltin' development this is").

My returning neighbors looked over the fence and noted the garden and the large diesel tank we'd installed for the generator (I didn't have anywhere to bury it). The tension in the tract was so thick you could cut it with a knife. The supplies problem hadn't been fully resolved either and more people created an increased food shortage and aggravated the fuel shortages.

We weren't quite at each other's throats because Elvia was trying to settle the disputes. Ron and Lyn were home so he couldn't translate for me and most of the Spanish I knew

would get my throat cut. Out respect to her, I won't repeat what I'd called those greasers behind her back. Elvia folks immigrated to the US when Fidel took over.

When Sharon had the house repaired/upgraded, she went with tile floor, the concrete block fence and so forth. I got the firearms I wanted and didn't care, at the time. On 3 sides, our home was secure. The front side wasn't and I so wanted to put in concrete block/wrought iron to finish enclosing our space. A person can do anything he/she wants, all it takes is money. I met Money once, a fleeting acquaintance, or was that Monty? Same difference.

My office was secure; at least it was up to 4' on the wall, the top of the road plate. I couldn't understand how my getting shot worked to make me so paranoid, I was better armed than they were and, I had body armor. Chris made sort of a saddle/gun rest I could lay a M1A in and the saddle went into the pintle mounts welded onto those road plates. One window could be manned with the Tac-50 and the other with an M1A. Chris had picked up more road plate (probably off the road). He offered to put in a second plate above the bottom plate with a rifle slit. He'd do it for 200 gallons of gas – I offered 50 – we settled on 100.

I didn't watch, I looked up road plate for an earlier story and I knew how much it weighed, a couple of tons per sheet. The plates were 4'x8' and the office extended 12' beyond the house, they were perfect, other than being too wide. He measured several times, then subtracted ½", just in case. He even predrilled the holes for the lag bolts.

He laid down ¾" plywood, then brought his engine hoist into the office through the garage. I lent him our appliance/furniture caddy and he used two to move the plate to our garage. He rearranged some shelves and pushed the plate far enough into the office he could pick it up with the engine hoist. The rifle slits were 9" wide and 24" high leaving him material to attach the chain to. I didn't think the engine hoist could lift the plate, it almost blew a gasket/o-ring doing it.

I was very lucky, we didn't crack any of Sharon's tile. She had 2 spare boxes put up, just in case. The window over the front patio raised up and down – it didn't leave me a lot of room to fire from. The window to my left was a slider and the shooting slit split the area where the screen used to be.

I don't know what I was expecting, I was just following the rule I laid down way back when, *prepare for the worst and hope for the best*. A man who had his ducks lined up would have identified the threats, considered the probability of their occurring and created a priority list. Right, can volcanoes read? I didn't think so. As it turned out, the probability of either Long Valley or Yellowstone erupting was the same as the San Andreas having another Big One, 1 in 20,000. Which, BTW, was the likelihood of Cascadia subducting or the Cascade range erupting, a probability of 0.00005.

Because Clarence and Shirley had moved to Birmingham, I disabused the notion of a strike from a NEO, a so called impact event. In the past 600 million years, there had on-

ly been 5 ELE's. Only one of those had been tied to a strike, the strike in Yucatán (Chicxulub Crater). The late Eugene Shoemaker of the USGS came up with an estimate of the rate of Earth impacts, and suggested that an event about the size of the nuclear weapon that destroyed Hiroshima occurs about once a year. Such events would seem to be spectacularly obvious, but they generally go unnoticed for a number of reasons: the majority of the Earth's surface is covered by water; a good portion of the land surface is uninhabited; and the explosions generally occur at relatively high altitude, resulting in a huge flash and thunderclap but no real damage.

Gene shoemaker died July 18, 1997 in an auto accident in Alice Springs, Australia. Gene had always wanted to go to the Moon. He got his wish, a portion of his ashes were aboard Lunar Prospector. Around the capsule is wrapped a piece of brass foil inscribed with an image of a Comet Hale-Bopp, an image of Meteor Crater in northern Arizona, and a passage from William Shakespeare's enduring love story, "Romeo and Juliet":

*And, when he shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with night,
And pay no worship to the garish sun*

The Lunar Prospector orbited the Moon for one year before being crashed into its surface. It gives a whole new meaning to the song, *Fly Me to the Moon*.

Many impact events occur without being observed by anyone on the ground. Between 1975 and 1992, American missile early warning satellites picked up 136 major explosions in the upper atmosphere. In the 21-Nov-2002 edition of the journal Nature, Peter Brown of the University of Western Ontario reported on his study of US early warning satellite records for the proceeding 8 years. He identified 300 flashes caused by 1m to 10m sized meteors in that time period and estimated the rate of Tunguska sized events as once in 400 years. Shoemaker estimated that one of such magnitude occurs about once every 300 years, though more recent analyses have suggested he exaggerated by an order of magnitude. Even at that, this is not a long interval, and it is a somewhat nerve-wracking question to consider when the next "Big One" will be, and more to the point, where.

Mixed metaphors aren't good, so from now on, "Big One" will refer to M_w8 earthquakes and those rocks from space will simply be called strikes. If a meteor or asteroid hit the San Andreas we could get the Big, "Big One". Heck, these tales are confusing enough as it is. When I sit down to record recent events, rarely do I know what's going to happen next, got a crack in my old crystal ball. The most likely event is some sort of terrorist attack and the second most likely event is a GTW. Nature, being female, seems to have a mind of her own. I've been married most of my life so I'm used to that and I am NOT complaining. May I quickly point out that every coin has 2 sides and an edge. When

you've been married for a while, you either accept that or go shopping. Shopping is VERY EXPENSIVE and you never find what you're looking for.

The Hard Way – Chapter 13

"Hey uglier than me, we're going to Robert's."

"Why are you telling me, need gas?"

"Got gas; hell I even got gasoline. No, I told you so you wouldn't worry about us while were gone."

"Buy some Beano. You taking your kids?"

"Nah, they're staying here to take care of the dogs and cats. We shouldn't be gone more than 2 weeks, tops. It takes 2 days each way, you know."

"It wouldn't if you didn't stop in Flagstaff. You quit before your engine is even warmed up."

"I like to drive slow on the Devil's Highway (US route 491, formerly US 666)."

o

I had to backtrack, too. The family that owned their home, next to us on the east, came back. The renters, next to us on the west didn't – I suppose they couldn't find a hole in the wire. The owner rented to a black couple and I'll have to tell you, they were very nice folks. He right off volunteered to be part of tract security, should the need arise again. This is where I need to insert Jose, "Oh, I hope not."

If a person thinks back to the Gordon Sinclair piece, you realize that there were a lot of those natural disasters. He listed a lot of them in his piece, *America*. I didn't count them so I don't know how many people the US helped over the years. I do know we bailed out Europe twice, WW I & WW II. Aside from the UK, our next best friend in Europe is the country we defeated twice, Germany. Anyone who doesn't like Tom Cruise's religion can't be all bad.

I can forgive them for not wanting to get involved in another long, drawn out war called the Global War on Terrorism. If they can keep the terrorists out of their country, and not send them here, that would be Jim Dandy. The UK had a fairly liberal immigration policy, letting in Muslims, Pakistanis, Indians, etc. Add to that Tony supporting George and you had an incident waiting to happen. The main thing they had going for them was their laws weren't as restrictive as our and they could move with speed to round up the bombers. That and a million TV cameras, like in George Orwell's *1984*.

I'm afraid that in my zeal to forecast natural disasters, I overlooked one: Global climate change defies forecasting. Unprecedented heat, floods, droughts and typhoons brought about by climate change cause tremendous damage. The number of such calamities

has doubled over the last 10 years, according to the Russian Emergency Situations Ministry.

Some experts think there is nothing to worry about-periodic alterations in the climate are normal. Some believe the general alarm is the result of a mere lack of knowledge. But then, the danger posed by climate change is no smaller than the danger posed by nuclear war, and we have to face and evaluate it, however vague it might appear.

There is no way to hide from global warming. In fact, the repercussions of climate change might be even worse because the entire climatic system will be thrown out of balance. The average surface temperature is going up, and so are annual deviations from it.

Natural calamities go hand in hand with warming. Disastrous floods are getting more frequent in Russia and many other countries. They account for more than half of weather-related dangers.

Floods alternate with droughts in European Russia's south. Heavy rains in spring and early summer cause floods, after which there is not a single raindrop for three months, destroying those crops that survive the floods.

The Kuban and Stavropol regions, Russia's breadbasket, permanently face this danger. Economic disasters caused by natural calamities are becoming ever more frequent. The World Bank estimates Russia's weather damages, largely caused by climate change, at an annual 30-60 billion rubles, roughly \$1-\$2 billion.

Floods, usually caused by typhoons, are also frequent in the Russian Far East-the Primorye and Khabarovsk territories, Kamchatka, Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands. Winter floods are typical of the Arctic Ocean basin.

The spring inundation of the Lena, the largest Eurasian river, washed away the town and port of Lensk in 2001. The town was rebuilt on a new site. The evacuation and ensuing housing and infrastructural reconstruction cost an exorbitant sum.

Average warming in Russia due to anthropogenic factors is about one degree. In Siberia, it is four to six degrees-enough to shrink the permafrost area. Pernicious effects are visible even now, with the borders of the taiga, forest tundra and tundra itself receding northward-suffice it to compare space photographs from 30 years ago with the latest ones.

The change endangers oil pipelines and the entire infrastructure of Siberia's west and northwest. Permafrost thawing has not yet achieved a scale that poses a threat of infrastructural accidents-but we can never be too careful.

Warming also poses a great danger to regional flora and fauna, which have to undergo a very painful adaptation process. Considerable warming will result in changes to eco-

systems, for example, broadleaved woods ousting the coniferous taiga. Warming makes the climate unstable, with bitter frosts and sultry summers, which is bad for both forest types-conifers suffer in the heat, while broadleaf trees do not survive frosty winters. So the biota will face many shocks before the climate stabilizes.

Warming is also a major problem for marshes and the permafrost, which will release accumulated methane and carbon dioxide gas. Gas hydrates from the northern sea shelf will vaporize. All that will drastically increase atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations, spurring the warming on in a vicious circle.

The environmental balance has already been upset. Many plants and animals will suffer. In particular, the polar bear's habitat is doomed to shrink, and millions of wild geese, eiders, brants and other birds will lose half of their nesting grounds in a matter of 20-40 years. A three to four degree warming may interrupt the food chain of the tundra ecosystem, lead to the extinction of many species.

Invasions of ecosystems by alien species are one of the worst manifestations of global warming. Thus, locusts are moving north, and have become frequent guests in the Samara Region on the Volga and certain other areas. The mite habitat is rapidly expanding, too. Pests migrate north far quicker than the border between, for example, the taiga and the forest tundra shifts. Once they find themselves in a foreign ecosystem, pests become gangster species, crowding out the native biota with dynamic multiplication. Climate change thus brings epidemics in its wake. Subtropical malarial mosquitoes now feel at home in the area around Moscow.

Scientists who welcome warming as a boon for Russian agriculture are entirely wrong. True, the vegetation period is becoming longer-but this benefit is outweighed by the hazard of spring frosts destroying young crops.

Another argument in favor of warming is the energy that would be saved by a reduced need for heating. But then, the United States uses more energy for air conditioning than Russia does for heating even now.

How can humankind fight climate change? It's no use opposing Nature, but we can reduce pollution and other adverse environmental effects brought about by humankind. The problem appeared on the political agenda in the 20th century.

The World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Program established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 1988, which brought together several thousand scientists, including Russians.

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change entered into force in 1994. One hundred and ninety countries have joined it since then. The document determines the scope of the international partnership to deal with the issue, whose first achievement was the Kyoto Protocol of 1997. Intensive economic activities are surely bad for the cli-

mate. That is why the protocol demands a reduction in air pollution caused by methane, carbon dioxide and other gases.

Russia ratified the protocol along with another 166 countries, and has been true to its pledge. It is introducing new, clean technologies for industry and everyday life. Cleaner air will help reverse the trend of climate change.

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I had suggested to a friend that when Putin went to Kennebunkport, he was there to arrange building a Dacha down on George's ranch in Paraguay. He'd move down there when he finished his third term. He just may have, hadn't he been diverted by the Avachinsky volcano in Kamchatka. Part of the Ring of Fire, there's a subduction zone involving Kamchatka and the Kuril Islands. It's the subduction of the Pacific Plate under the Okhotsk Plate, which forms the Kuril Trench some 200 km east of the islands.

According to the news, we had increased activity in the Cascade Range with some of the hot spots, like Lassen for example, becoming hotter. Only Mt. St. Helens and Lassen (referred to as "the Great Explosion") had erupted during the 20th century. In fact, Yellowstone, Mt. Lassen and Mt. St. Helens are the most active spots in the lower 48. I wondered what that had to do with Ron's reported rumbling of Long Valley.

"Hey asshole, we're back."

"How was your brother?"

"His bypass is clogged up again and the surgeon won't operate. He could go anytime, heart attack."

"Didn't you say his wife was nearly as sick?"

"They take turns. Two or three years ago, they weren't sure she'd live. We're all getting old, Gar-Bear. I'm really worn out from the trip."

"Did you hear about that Russian Volcano?"

"Uh-uh, do tell."

"It's one of the volcanoes on Kamchatka. I'm guessing, but I think maybe some of our Alaskan volcanoes might act up too. There's been some activity at Mt. Lassen and Mt. St. Helens."

"What about Long Valley?"

"I haven't heard anything, do you want to drive up and look?"

"I'll have to pass. BTW, I took all of the empty brass I had and Robert and I reloaded it. At the moment, I'm in good shape on ammo. I'll come by in a couple of days for coffee. Besides, I have something for you, provided you have a little cash."

"How much is a little?"

"I brought you 40 cartons of Super Longs, a little over a grand."

"You went to the Res."

"Actually, I went to several, I didn't want to look like I was hoarding. You buy about 5 cartons at a time, they don't say too much."

"Great, I was getting worried I couldn't find more."

"Robert wouldn't reload your Berdan primed brass. He had the tool but not the temperament."

"I think we can get by, thanks."

"Gotta go, Ciao."

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The first eruption was Mt. Lassen. The eruptions seemed march right up the Cascade chain, hitting Shasta, Medicine Lake, McLoughlin, Crater, Newberry, the Three Sisters, Jefferson, Hood, Adams and St. Helens on the same day and everyone was holding his/her collective breath about Rainer. The problem with Rainer was the amount of snow on it, especially heavy this year. It had over 30 glaciers and if one or both of the craters erupted, it could wash Tacoma and possibly Seattle into the ocean/sound.

Mt. Rainer is the furthest north mountain in the Southern Cascade Range, with the mountains to the north being part of the Northern Cascades. It steamed but seemed to lack enough heat to melt the snow or erupt. Ron was over for coffee on the day Crater Lake erupted.

"Damn, would you look at that!"

"Wiki said there was some geothermal activity at the bottom and it could erupt in the future."

"Wiki, phooey. You've been impossible to live with since they set up that website."

"Yeah but, they have something you sometimes lack, Ronald."

"What's that?"

"Standards."

"Watch it, I'll punch your lights out. I have standards, you just don't appreciate them."

He finished his coffee and may have left in a huff. Because the phones were still intermittent due to the EMP, we stayed in touch, most of the time, by CB radio. A person had to be careful what he said on an open line like that. We never gave out any information that would allow the Mexicans to find us. So far, most couldn't get into the Antelope Valley, the Deputies blocked the passes just before the Pearblossom exit. They also blocked Sierra Highway near the same spot and I suspect, rather than knew, they had other roads blocked as well. Lance told me they had 138 blocked both ways (near I-5 on the west and at the junction of 138 and 18 on the east).

Over a period of about 6 weeks, all of the Southern Cascade volcanoes erupted except for Rainer. When Rainer didn't erupt we assumed it was over. Shortly after, the USGS issued an Advisory for Long Valley. Within the week the Advisory for Long Valley was advanced to Watch. They have this new scheme: normal-advisory-watch-warning. The aviation warnings are: green-yellow-orange-red.

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The radio announcer said the Sheriff's Department had been forced to use explosives and blow the pass. Ron thought they might have done the pass where 14 was really narrow due to a cut through a mountain. I told him they had to do it after Angeles Forest Highway merged into Sierra Highway. This time, I won \$5, they blew it at Vincent Hill. It's gonna be a bitch rebuilding that bridge they blew up. Ron and I wanted to go A Place To Shoot, located on San Francisquito Canyon Road, but they had Lake Elizabeth Road blocked between Bouquet Canyon Road and Godde Hill Road. The other place we went was blocked by that landslide at Vincent Hill.

If there was anything good about the day after, it was that you could load up a rifle or two and go shooting in the desert, like they used to do before we got civilized. We talked it over and he said we might run into some of those Mexicans. I told him with the luck we had, we'd get about 10 miles from home and Long Valley would erupt. We decided to stay home.

"Tell me one more time why you have a Tac-50 rifle."

"Sure, just as soon as you explain the .338, .375 and .458. Ron, there isn't any game around here to use those rifles on."

"I know, I just wanted them and got them used for a reasonable price."

"That's probably more reasonable than the reason I got the McMillan. I wanted it primarily because they're illegal in Kalifornia. With the exception of the Barrett, most of the

guns I bought are all Kalifornia legal. The magazines aren't, but I have one legal magazine for both the M1As and the 1911. I'm sort of like James Dean, a rebel without a cause."

"Just wondered, you've never shot it except when we go to practice."

"True. When was the last time you went hunting for Moose, Elk, Brown Bears or Elephants?"

"I figured my guns will do about what yours does, plus, they're legal."

"Have you ever read Paradise?"

"What's that about?"

"A former Air Force Lt. Col. and his wife after the planet was struck by a NEO which resulted in triggering WW III."

"Nope, why?"

"He's an ER Doctor and his wife is a Pharmacist. They're both ex-Air Force and he wanted a M82 in Paradise. He bought it, but I think only his friend George shot it. I still have most of the HEIAP ammo for the rifle so if we need to use it, it will supplement our other weapons well. It's sighted in and I'm fairly certain I could reach out and touch someone if the need arose. Your guns may be legal but mine has a much greater effective range."

"Well, until we get caught outside of the tract, the maximum distance will be about 100 yards."

"Would you rather have it and not need it, or need it and..."

"Not have it. I've heard that argument before. Think of the things you could have bought with that 10 grand you spent."

"What, war bonds?"

"How about food, ammo and cigarettes?"

"We have enough for now. As far as ammo goes, we have more than we'll probably ever use. We both have over a case of smokes and about 2 years of food stored. Quit worrying, would you?"

I noticed the ground began shaking, maybe an earthquake.

"Hey, is it shaking at your house?"

"Yeah, but it's not that bad, what do you think, an earthquake?"

"I don't know, it feels like it's further away."

"Maybe Long Valley?"

"Could be, I'll check the TV, KD6GDQ out."

I turned on channel 3, the Time Warner channel that carried local news. Long Valley had gone to watch and warning. Warning meant they expected an eruption, soon. I figured I'd better get Ron back on the CB and tell him what I heard.

"Ron, Gary, it's Long Valley."

"What channel did you watch?"

"Channel 3, why?"

"I watched 41, they put out a watch on Yellowstone."

"They have a warning on Long Valley."

"Both of them?"

"Unless one of us is lying, both of them."

"What direction is the wind from?"

"Hang on a minute – uh, from the Northeast."

"What's the map of ash falls show?"

"We're inside of Long Valley and just on the edge of Yellowstone if it's big enough."

Volcanic ash is carried by the wind, much as radioactive fallout. If a person knows the wind direction and speed, it's possible to estimate when the ash will arrive. I not only had the TX-2000, I had a weather station with the sensors mounted on my radio mast. It didn't take me long to determine when we should begin receiving ash, so I knew almost exactly how much time we had to prepare.

Media communications were, at best, unreliable and, at worst, worthless. It was nearly an hour before we got the EAS message concerning Long Valley. The media reports were warning of an eruption of Long Valley even though the government had yet to confirm it. Ron said the Yellowstone was up to watch, or orange, and it was only one step away from its own eruption. I'd seen Supervolcano when it aired and Lowenstern didn't

impress me. I not saying he doesn't know his stuff, just that he reminded me of Harry Dalton's boss, Paul Dreyfus in the movie Dante's Peak.

I switched the TV to Headline News (41) and sure enough, they were broadcasting the watch for Yellowstone. I searched the web, trying to find out what Lowenstern actually knew. I found this:

Education:

1992: Ph.D. - Stanford University, Stanford, California USA

1990: M.S. - Stanford University, Stanford, California USA

1985: B.A. - Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, USA

Experience:

2002 - Scientist-in-Charge, Yellowstone Volcano Observatory

1994 - Research Geologist, US Geological Survey

1993-94 - Postdoctoral Fellow, US Geological Survey

1992-93 - Research Associate, Geological Survey of Japan

Publications and Awards:

Authored or co-authored over 50 scientific papers and over 50 abstracts.

2000 - Lindgren Award (Young Scientist) Society of Economic Geologists

1986-87 - Fulbright Fellowship, Catania, Italy

Research Interests:

Interaction between magmas and their overlying hydrothermal systems. Behavior of magmatic volatiles during magmagenesis, ascent and eruption. Geothermal systems and their role in redistribution of heat and mass in the upper crust. Gas geochemistry of magma-hydrothermal systems – geochemical signals of volcanic unrest.

He had the education and I'd seen a program a few years back where he looked more like a kid than a 50 year old man. While I didn't know his age, it started with him getting a BA, subtract 4 and then 20. Nearly as I could tell, he was born the year I graduated from High School, give or take 3-4 years.

*Smiling faces sometimes pretend to be your friend
Smiling faces show no traces of the evil that lurks within
Smiling faces, smiling faces sometimes
They don't tell the truth uh
Smiling faces, smiling faces
Tell lies and I got proof*

*The truth is in the eyes
Cause the eyes don't lie, amen
Remember a smile is just
A frown turned upside down
My friend let me tell you*

*Smiling faces, smiling faces sometimes
They don't tell the truth, uh
Smiling faces, smiling faces
Tell lies and I got proof
Beware, beware of the handshake
That hides the snake
I'm telling you beware
Beware of the pat on the back
It just might hold you back
Jealousy (jealousy)
Misery (misery)
Envy*

*I tell you, you can't see behind smiling faces
Smiling faces sometimes they don't tell the truth
Smiling faces, smiling faces
Tell lies and I got proof*

*Smiling faces, smiling faces sometimes
They don't tell the truth
Smiling faces, smiling faces
Tell lies and I got proof
(Smiling faces, smiling faces sometimes)
(Smiling faces, smiling faces sometimes)
I'm telling you beware, beware of the handshake
That hides the snake
Listen to me now, beware
Beware of that pat on the back
It just might hold you back
Smiling faces, smiling faces sometimes
They don't tell the truth
Smiling faces, smiling faces
Tell lies and I got proof*

*Your enemy won't do you no harm
Cause you'll know where he's coming from
Don't let the handshake and the smile fool ya
Take my advice I'm only try' to school ya*

*Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.*

Let tell how it really was...

The Hard Way – Chapter 14

Ron and I were both a little older than our wives and getting tired, very tired. We were above our life expectancies, essentially living on borrowed time. Neither one of us was sure we had another disaster, natural or man-made, in us. If what I'd read was true, ash could be with us for several years, provided we got some. If that weren't bad enough, the ash would eliminate global warming and possibly lead into the beginnings of another mini ice age. While a nuclear winter might last one or two seasons, (a) multiple Super-volcano eruption(s) potentially could cool the planet for years.

The upside, if there were one, lay in the fact that the Arctic and Antarctic would re-freeze, removing fresh water from the oceans and allowing the Gulf Stream to reemerge. However, that hadn't happened recently and neither of us were scientists so we didn't know what it would mean. Our best guess was we'd be growing crops from the northern tier of states right here in the desert.

When we refi'd the house, she decided to do some of the things I wanted, like that block wall. The guy Ron recommended must have been busy and sent another guy. Before him came the contractor who wanted \$13,500 for the fence; he wanted \$10,050. We kept looking and found a guy who'd do it for \$5,500 labor and we buy the materials. It was cheaper to buy 50-50 gravel mix and cement than premixed concrete. We bought 20 scoops of aggregate and the guy didn't dump it where we told him to. I tried to shovel it off the sidewalk and couldn't do it. They ended up coming back and moving it, for about 2 hours.

We were buying Crystal Geyser water in the 1 gallon bottles, just in case. Every time they went on sale, we bought 20 or 30. They stopped bottling water after the war but with the tank we had, it didn't really matter.

From the time I'd bought my first M1A, I'd made it clear that Derek got my guns. After I got the 590A1, I fell in love and gave them the appropriated 870s. I wanted 12 pellet 00 Buck, but let the guy talk me into 8-pellet Remington low-recoil. It had gotten so I couldn't tell real life from my stories, until I looked out the window.

Within 2 days, both Long Valley and Yellowstone had been reduced to advisories, maybe Lowenstern had been right. They remained at the advisory stage for about 2-3 weeks and finally went back normal. Ron and I agreed we'd gotten a break and there appeared nothing going on around the US that spelled trouble other than the Mexican invasion.

"What do you want to do Gar-Bear?"

"Ron, I think we should get the homeowners assembled and decide as a group whether or not to maintain a watch; how does that sound?"

"Don't count us in on that, we have our own group over on Sweetbrush."

"John mentioned it, I won't. If Long Valley and Yellowstone are ok, do you think that ends it?"

"I don't know, I saw that program on the History Channel back in either '06 or '07 about Mt. Tambora."

"The last major eruption of Mt. Tambora was in 1815 and caused The Year Without a Summer in 1816."

"That what they said in the program. I suppose you have a file on your computer all about that."

"I didn't know I needed one, what did they say on the program?"

"That over the course of the past 15-20 years, Mt. Tambora has increased its output of sulfur dioxide, suggesting that magma was moving up again."

"Did that volcano erupt recently?"

"Not in the last 50 years or so. They said the last eruption was in 1967. Why don't you go ahead and have your meeting of the homeowners. I'll talk to you later. Ciao."

"Ciao."

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That meeting was a total waste of time. With Long Valley and Yellowstone settling down, nobody wanted to listen when I tried to explain about Mt. Tambora. The majority rules and in this case, they didn't want to maintain a watch during the day. By a vote of 4-1, they decided to only have one person on watch during the night and it would only be 2 shifts, 10pm-2am and 2am-6am. I told them I wouldn't participate in the night watch; I'd do the day watch instead. Because I normally go to bed around 1am and get up around 10am, I had to change my sleeping schedule.

One person to guard the entire housing tract seemed to be impossible, given the equipment that I had. What I needed was a Dillon Aero M134D Minigun. Match that with a single can of ammo (4,400 rounds) and I could hold off plenty of bad guys. I'd read about them using the gun mounted in ring mounts on Ford 350 pickups to guard Oakridge, Tennessee. They used rent-a-cops and I'm at least THAT smart. I had the catalog on my computer, but it lacked prices. That was either because if you had to ask the price, you couldn't afford it; or, it was LEO and Military only. Those rent-a-cops were neither, maybe there's hope.

I'm not sure what happened, but when winter came on it felt more like Charles City, Iowa than Palmdale, Kalifornia. The DOT has some snow removal equipment to keep 14

clear and they used it instead to clear the main streets in the AV. We had maybe 3 snow shovels in the entire housing tract. I really did try to shovel snow assuming if I didn't, no one would. I got the walk from the front door to the sidewalk clear – in about 6 hours.

"How did you get here?"

"We shoveled out Sweetbrush to get to R-4 and I drove. It's awful cold out there, what's going on?"

"I'm not sure, but I think it snowed."

"Idiot. Of course it snowed. The lowest temperature ever recorded in Palmdale was last night, Gar-Bear, 0°, 6° lower than the previous low."

"I shoveled the walk."

"You did? I figured Amy did that."

"She said we could wait for it to melt. Does it feel like it will melt soon?"

"If you mean April or May, maybe. First, we had the scare about the volcanoes. There hasn't been anything on any of the media about Mt. Toba or Mt. Tambora blowing up so I can't think of anything that would explain this cooling. You know, I still sometimes check the Minneapolis Star Tribune because it's on my list of websites to check. They got about 100" of snow up there."

"It snows up there every year."

"Yeah, but, the maximum record was about 98". The paper said they had accumulated 100" and snow was still falling. Minneapolis gets arctic air masses accounting for the heavy snowfalls. The forecast was for up to an additional 24"."

"I checked Charles City. They didn't get as much, only about 40". That's about double what they get in the month of December, most years."

"You must hate it when the internet goes down."

"Every morning I check at least 2 TV stations, KSL and KCBS. Then, I check the network news for ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox and CNN. Next, I check 1st Headlines, Breitbart and Newsmax. I also check Reuters, UPI, AP and US and World news before I hit the papers. The papers are up to Arab News, Charles City Press, Chicago Tribune, Christian Science Monitor, DEBKAFfile, Des Moines Register, Deseret News, UK Guardian, Haaretz Daily, Israel News – Arutz Sheva, Jerusalem Post, LA Examiner, LA Times, London Times, NY Post, NY Sun, NY Times, Post Chronicle, Roll Call, Star Tribune, UK Observer (Sundays only), UK Telegraph, USA Today, Washington Examiner, Washing-

ton Post, Washington Times, Weekly Standard and the World Net Daily. Next, I check the DOD and the Dept. of Homeland Insecurity."

"How long does that take?"

"Two to three hours. After that, I check 4 survival forums including their fiction and forum sections. Plus, I have a group of positive and negative websites and about two dozen I haven't classified. I suppose that it takes up to 5 hours to get caught up."

"Damn, that's a lot of reading, do you read every story?"

"Nah, just the ones that interest me. I want to know how close we are to all out trying to destroy ourselves and if some jerk scientist has some new theory about the end of the world. You can tell when I have a bad news day."

"How?"

"If I can find any ammo dealers who still ship ammo, I order more."

"Did you ever get the extra South African ammo you wanted?"

"Fat chance!"

"That pistol a 13 shot?"

"Couldn't get one. Settled for a Taurus PT1911B 8 plus 1."

"I've been pondering. So, tell me, what's next?"

"Darned if I know. Maybe we'll just get old and die."

That day, Ron and I mostly sat and talked. It had been a long and troubled life for both of us. For whatever reason, we'd both turned to alcohol to deaden the pain. We both drank for more than 30 years and paid for it in spades. We were both surprised we'd lasted this long and even more surprised that we had the chance to pass on some of the skills we'd picked up over the years.

History repeats itself and is frequently rewritten by later generations. If you talk about the Vietnam War, many emphasize the peace movement instead of the troops we sent and those that died. If there was every an example of gross mismanagement, it was that war. That's what happens when you let civilians make military decisions. The same thing applied in the latter stages of the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The only difference was it was Teddy Kennedy and his pals who wanted to run away from the war.

The Hard Way – Epilog

Up to a point, this tale is more fact than fiction. Having spent three years talking about it, we finally made the step and began to prepare, none too soon. The order of the events that happened is pure speculation, but they're the events more likely to happen. The government will have enough doses of anthrax vaccine in about 3 years. Huntsville, Alabama is building bomb shelters to house up to 300,000. My major concern is wheat, there's a looming shortage due to climate and conversion of wheat fields to corn fields.

People who believe in the Rule of Threes claim that bad things always happen in threes. We waited for the last shoe to drop – nothing happened on the scale of what we'd experienced. I didn't know it when I said it, but my reply to Ron accurately reflected what happened. The final event happened but it wasn't in the US, although we'd feel the effects for years to come. Here's the article I read about what happened:

Toba in Sumatra experienced the massive volcano of VEI 8.0 – super volcano 74,000 years back. The deep Java trench marks the line where the Indo-Australian plate subducts, i.e. slips under, the section of the Eurasian plate on which Indonesia sits. While sinking, the Indo-Australian plate heats up and its water content turns to superheated steam under enormous pressure. Prodigious energies are generated and the volcanoes on the fault line release a part of these energies. The speed of that push is 70 mm (2.75 in.) per year, adding up to more than 5 km (3.1 miles) in the 73,000 years since the last major Toba eruption.

According to computer models, somewhere near Toba, along the fault line there may be another super volcano getting ready for eruption. 3.1 mile sinking of Indo-Australian plate under the Eurasian Plate in the last 74,000 years has created enough magma for a super volcano.

The recent series of volcanoes in that area have increased the level of alarm. Some of the quakes mistaken as aftershocks were harmonic tremors signifying lava movements. If Toba or along Toba the volcanic eruption take place, it can bring the human civilization to its knees. This has the potential 3000 cubic Kilometers of eruption. That can be so devastating that earth may experience a drop in temperature of 30° F for many years. It can actually larger than the one Toba experienced 74,000 years back.

Simultaneous Terrestrial and Solar polar reversal in 2012 accompanied by recent tectonic movement as well as harmonic tremor in the area shows high probability of a mega volcano in 2012 in that area.

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